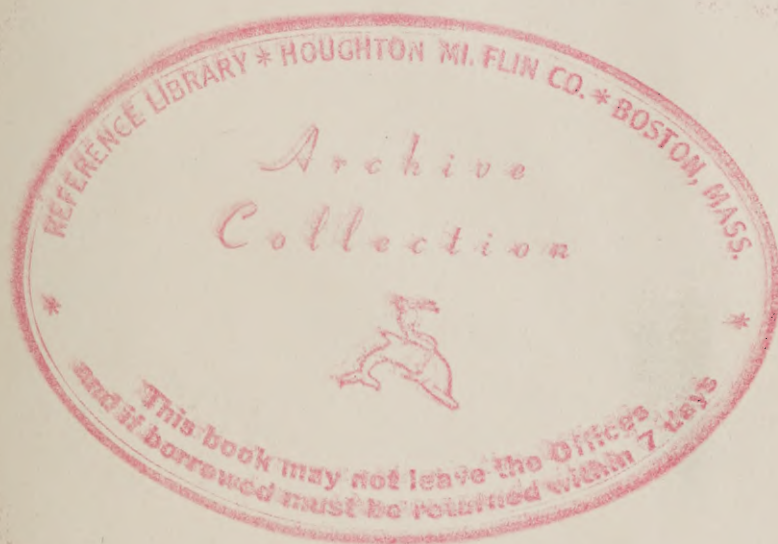


THE CHINA COW

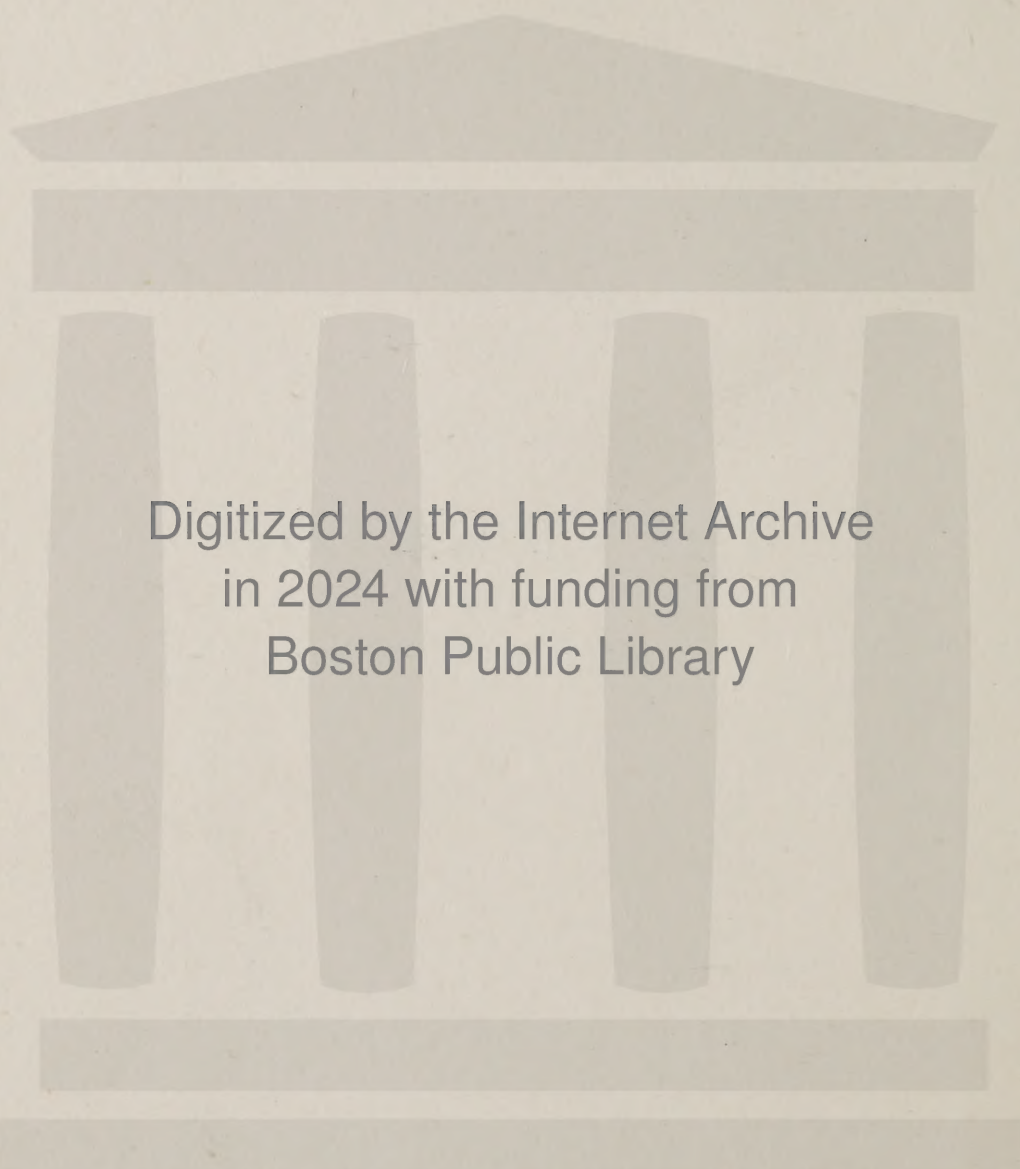


GLADYS PETO

PAN



THE CHINA COW
AND
OTHER STORIES



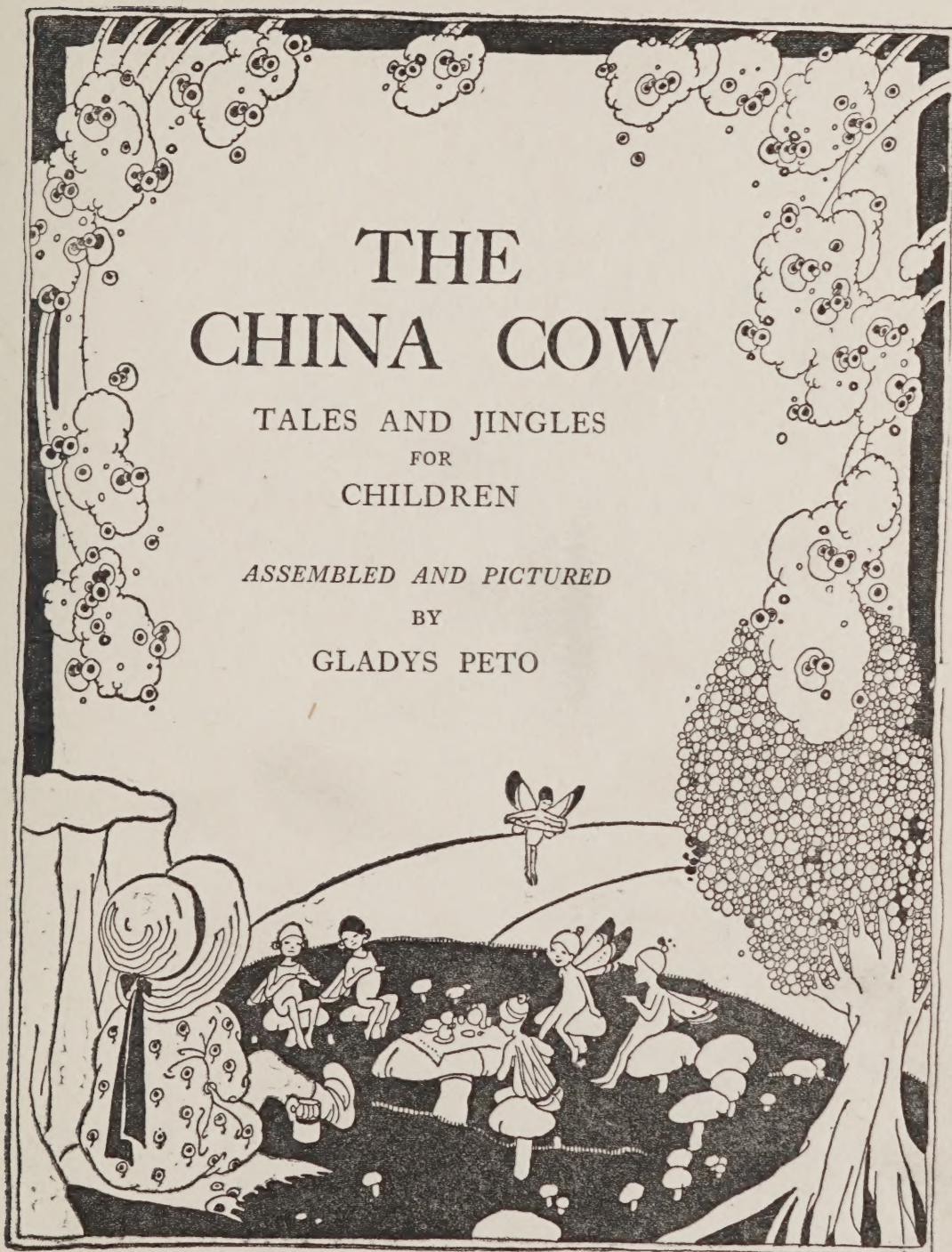
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THE CHINA COW

TALES AND JINGLES
FOR
CHILDREN

ASSEMBLED AND PICTURED
BY
GLADYS PETO



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THE CHINA COW

BY

SEWELL STOKES

ERIC closed the book which he had been reading in the dining-room, and stared at the fire; he was tired of reading, and it was very interesting looking at the funny faces, and houses, and weird shapes which you can see in a fire if you look at it long enough. Eric was eight years old, and like most boys of that age he did not believe in Father Christmas, and fairies, or anything of that sort, which he considered to be babyish. There was a very valuable china cow on the mantel-piece; it was a white cow with blue flowers painted all over its back and round its neck, and blue eyes which were always looking at the clock on the sideboard, as if she was trying to learn how to read the time.

"What a dull time ornaments must have," thought Eric, "they do nothing but stand still from the time when they're made to the time when they get broken. But I s'pose as they're just ornaments they don't mind . . . because they don't know how to mind."

THE CHINA COW

Eric looked at the china cow, and as he looked he thought it moved and wagged its tail; he thought it turned round and walked along the mantel-piece. Eric rubbed his eyes, blinked, and pinched himself, but the cow went on moving, and at last it walked to the edge of the mantel-piece and looked at him steadily.

“What a silly little boy you are,” said the cow in a quaint voice, which sounded like someone calling from a long way off.

“I’m not silly!” cried Eric indignantly. “And I’m not little either, I’m eight years old!”

“You’re an extremely *silly little* boy,” replied the cow, speaking more loudly than before, as though the person who was calling had come nearer. “And you mustn’t be rude when you talk to me, I’m eighty years older than you.”

“I don’t care if you’re a thousand years older,” said Eric. “You’re only a china cow whatever your age is, and if you’re not careful you’ll fall off the mantel-piece and break your stupid old head off!”

Just then a step was heard in the hall outside the room, and the cow hastily went back to her place saying, “If you come to this room at midnight I’ll show you that I’m not a china cow!”

Eric had no time to reply before the door opened and his mother came in.

“Bedtime, Eric,” she said, “be a good boy and go along at once.”

Eric sulkily did as he was told, he always hated going to bed, and this evening he wanted to stay and talk to the china cow.

THE CHINA COW

When he was in bed and the light was turned out, he began thinking of the china cow again.

“ I don’t believe it moved at all,” he thought. “ I just imagined that it did. How silly I am ; as though a china cow *could* move and talk ! ”

But somehow he felt that however ridiculous it might be the cow *had* moved, and *had* talked to him. He remembered distinctly what it had said and how it had flapped its tail over its back.

“ I know what I’ll do,” he said to himself, “ I’ll go to the room at midnight as she told me to, and then I can make sure whether she moved or not.”

But as he went to bed at eight it meant keeping awake for four hours, and he was very sleepy. He tried hard to keep his eyes open, but he could not manage it ; every now and then they closed against his will. He did not dare turn the light on and keep awake that way, lest his father or mother should pass and see the light through the crack under the door. At last he could not keep his eyes open any longer ; they closed and he went to sleep.

But during the night he woke up to hear the clock of some church quite near striking twelve, and a strange noise which seemed to come from downstairs. Delighted that he should have woken up in time to go and see the china cow, he got out of bed and put his slippers on.

He opened the door carefully so that nobody should hear him and crept downstairs. As he went the strange noise grew louder and louder, until when he got to the door of the dining-room it was so loud that he realised that it was coming from inside.

He turned the handle and went in ; and what a shock he



GLADYS PETO-

"What is that place over there?"

THE CHINA COW

had when he got inside! A big white cow with a funny blue pattern on her back and round her neck, was standing in the middle of the room mooing as loudly as she could! It was the china cow who had come to life and grown.

Eric was just a little frightened, but he pretended that he wasn't and said, "Hullo, cow!"

The cow looked at Eric and flapped its tail. "So you've come," she said, "now d'you see what a silly little boy you are?"

"I—I s'pose I was rather silly," Eric replied, wondering whether he ought to call the cow "madame." "But I'm not little, it's only because you're so big that you think that."

"Stuff and nonsense!" cried the cow. "If I say you're little, you *are* little, and there's no getting away from the fact."

The cow tried to scratch her ear with one of her hoofs, but she was not very successful.

"Excuse me," said Eric, "but if you like I'll scratch your ear for you."

"Thank you," replied the cow, and Eric scratched for all he was worth.

"You're not such a silly little boy as I thought," said the cow, when her ear had been satisfactorily scratched, "and now if you like to get on my back I'll take you for a ride."

"We can't go for much of a ride in this room," replied Eric.

"We shan't stay in the room," said the cow, "we'll go to Africa if you like."

"Oh, but I've only got my pyjamas on," said Eric.

The cow snorted. "Diddums t'ink oo'd get cold?" she said.

THE CHINA COW

“No, I didn’t!” shouted Eric, getting on the cow’s back.
“So there!”

Before he knew what had happened Eric found that he and the cow were flying through the air over London. They went so quickly that he could hardly distinguish the buildings below them, but he thought he saw Trafalgar Square and St. Paul’s.

“Shall we go to Africa or the South Pole?” cried the cow over her shoulder.

“Africa!” Eric shouted back, because he was feeling very cold in his pyjamas and he longed to be warm again. They were soon sailing over the sea, and they were so high up that Eric could see the shores of England and France at the same time. As they flew southwards the air became warmer and warmer, and after about three and a half hours they saw the shores of Africa in the distance.

“Here we are!” said the cow when they landed, “this is Africa. Of course everybody’s in bed now.”

“What’s that place over there?” Eric asked, pointing to a building on the horizon.

“That’s one of the pyramids,” the cow replied, making patterns in the sand with her front hoof.

“And what are those little black specks in the distance?”

The cow looked at the black specks. “I don’t know,” she said.

“They’re coming nearer!” cried Eric excitedly.

“So they are!” cried the cow. “I wonder what they are.”

Nearer and nearer came the black specks, and soon it could be seen that they were men on horseback.

THE CHINA COW

“ By my tail ! ” cried the cow. “ They’re Arabs. Jump on my back or they’ll capture us ! ”

Eric climbed on to the cow’s back, and they flew up into the air just in time to escape from the Arabs, who shouted to them to come back.

“ I don’t know what would have happened if they’d caught us,” said the cow as they flew back towards London.

Eventually they flew back into the dining-room and Eric slid off the cow’s back.

“ Thank you so much,” said Eric, “ it was awfully good of you to take me, I loved——”

“ Shhhhh ! ” cried the cow. “ There’s someone coming ! ”

The cow leapt on to the mantel-piece, and as she leapt she grew smaller so that by the time she reached her proper position she was her proper size.

“ If you come to-morrow night and scratch my ear,” she whispered, “ I’ll take you to Japan.”

The door burst open and Eric’s father and mother and the two maids rushed in. Eric’s mother dropped into a chair with a sigh of relief.

“ Here he is ! ” she cried. “ But how did he get here ? ”

“ Walked in his sleep, I should think,” replied his father.

And Eric let them think that that was what had happened, but secretly he looked forward to the next night when the cow was going to take him to Japan.

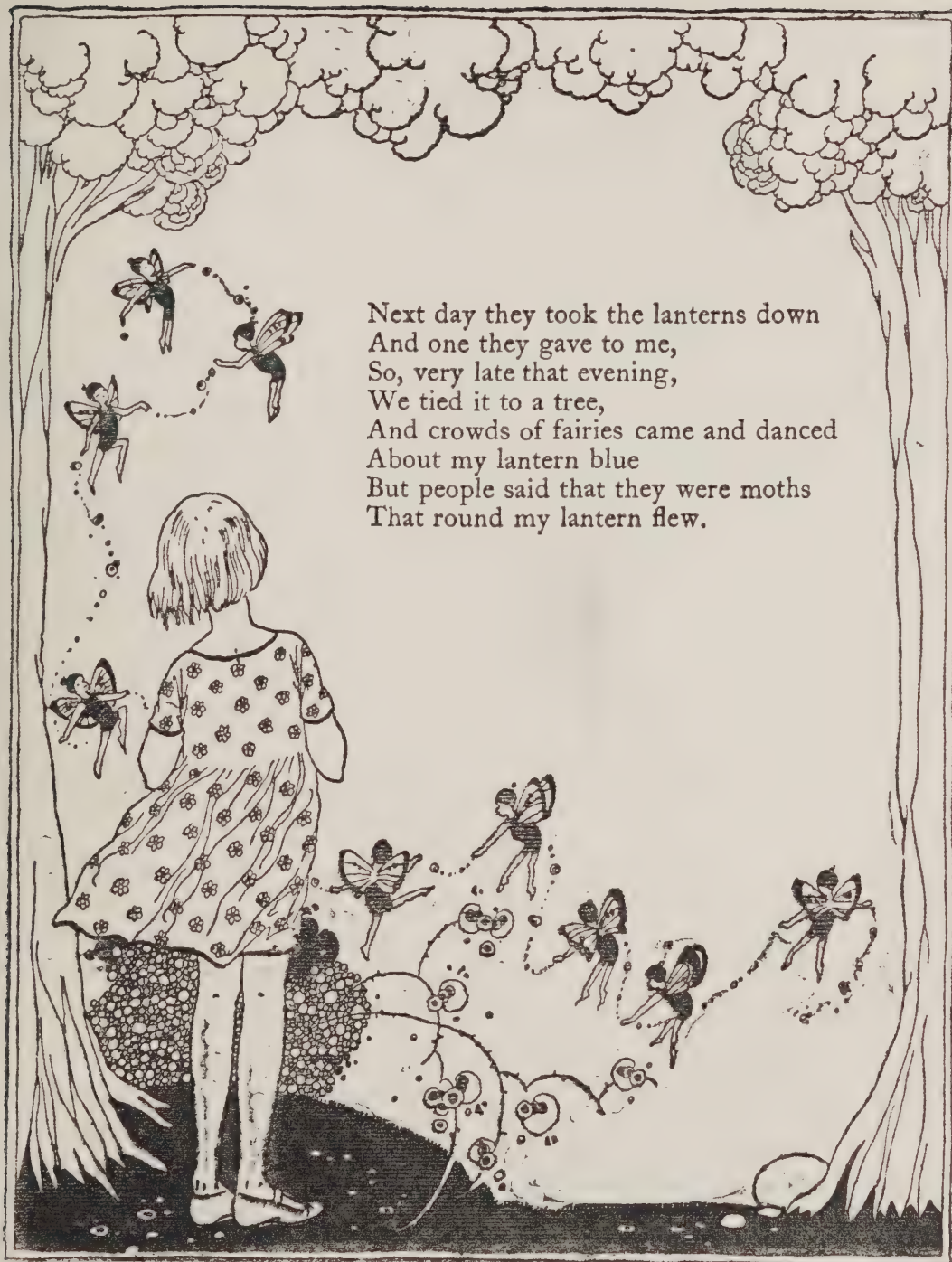


THE BLUE LANTERN

BY

GLADYS PETO

THE grown-ups gave a party once,
And danced upon the lawn—
In shining frocks, and silver shoes,
They danced until the dawn—
And though they said 'now go to
sleep,'
We couldn't sleep—could you?
For think, they'd lanterns on the trees
All red, and gold, and blue—
We stood and watched for ages there
Although they never knew.



Next day they took the lanterns down
And one they gave to me,
So, very late that evening,
We tied it to a tree,
And crowds of fairies came and danced
About my lantern blue
But people said that they were moths
That round my lantern flew.

GLADYS PETO.

THE PRINCESS VISITS THE REST-HOUSE

BY

GLADYS PETO



ONCE upon a
time there
was a Rest
House that stood
upon the edge of

a long white road all planted with mimosa trees.

A Rest House is not at all the same as an Inn, because at an Inn you have, of course, to pay, and people often say they have had to pay much, far too much, but the Rest House belonged to the King of that country, who had had it built up for travellers to pass the night in, and you brought your own food with you, and often your own bed, and only gave a coin or so to the old woman who looked after things and cooked the food.

The old woman was called Susannah—except by some people who called her the Blot on the Rest House. She was black just like a blot. I don't mean she was a negro body, but her hands were black. Her clothes were black—a brownie sort of black, and she had a black handkerchief round her head, and very thick boots. She clattered all about the Rest

PRINCESS VISITS THE REST HOUSE

House on her old thick boots, clump—clump—clump—and you'd never believe how slowly she walked—particularly when you were hungry and wanted your food very quickly. But nobody ever abused her—because they were so polite in that country, and so much obliged to the King for building the Rest House.

Susannah was a very tall, thin, old lady with a hooked nose like a witch.

One day a Princess and her aunt came to the Rest House. They were in the middle of a long journey, but all their servants who drove their gold coach, and all their cream coloured horses, and indeed the gold coach itself had caught Measles, so they had left them all at the Measles Hospital and come on to the Rest House themselves. They'd a little village girl called Amelia to carry their supper and hold up the Princess's train, and the supper was oysters and strawberries and cream.

Now, these are things that need not be cooked, you know—Cooked raspberries are nice, but cooked strawberries—no—but perhaps you've tried—and cooked oysters are a great mistake.

The Princess and her aunt and Amelia all sat round the fire and waited for Susannah to get the supper ready and to make the beds upstairs (beds were provided if you hadn't brought your own). Susannah walked about upstairs, clump—clump—clump—and the people below all got hungrier and hungrier and black smoke came smoking out of the stove because Susannah never had the chimney swept.

The aunt had a purple dress with stars on it, and the Princess had a large crown on (it was made of pink coral flowers), and a pale pink dress with a long train, and Amelia



They'd a little village girl called Amelia . . .



GLADYS PETO-

. . . To hold up the Princess's train

PRINCESS VISITS THE REST HOUSE

had a blue dress and a little apron with yellow daisies on it. The only other travellers were two performing dogs who travelled alone and lived by the money they collected at their performances. They were very rich dogs and had fine silver collars on, and travelling kennels that took all to pieces and packed up on their backs. They had brought a leg of mutton for their suppers (the elder dog had carried it in his mouth in a basket) and they could smell it cooking. They *were* so hungry and the smell came streaming into the room. When the smell seemed particularly beautiful they thumped very hard with their tails, but like everyone else they did not complain of Susannah.

The Princess sat in a fine large chair and wished she were at home. She was terribly tired of travelling. The aunt had said it was time she was married, as she was nearly eighteen and could play both the harp and the mandolin and paint fluffy kittens on satin; and as Princes in those parts had ceased riding out in search of a bride, the aunt had driven out with the Princess to look for a Prince. The aunt was hoping to find a Prince soon, not that she wanted to get home—on the contrary, she wanted to take a cottage on the edge of a wood and lead a really simple life and only wear her crown on Sundays, but she meant to wait till the Princess was married as she did not think it would make a good impression on the Princes. It must not be supposed, however, that she was an agreeable lady—she was extremely ill-tempered, and the only reason she wanted to leave the palace was because she was tired of engaging servants. The King let her live here on condition that she arranged about the servants, and though there were 418 of them they all left every day as she was so unkind and spoke so rudely to them.



Put her head round the door

Well, there they all sat for an hour and three-quarters, and the dogs began to smell their mutton burning, and tears came into their eyes, and their tails ceased to thump, but they never said any harsh words about Susannah because no one ever did such a thing.

Then suddenly clump—clump—clump—outside. Susannah was coming down the stairs. She put her head round the door and—

“Supper will be ready in an hour and half,” she said; “you can’t have the oysters, I can’t open them—and the leg of



"You stupid old idiot of a woman" . . .



. . . and threw her shoe at Susannah

mutton's all burnt up—the strawberries are bad, and the cream is sour—but I'll make some nice turnip soup—if there are any turnips in the garden.”

“ You stupid, good-for-nothing, abominable old idiot of a woman ! ” screamed the Princess's aunt, and threw her shoe at Susannah.

There was a clap of thunder heard—the black clothes slipped away from Susannah and she stood up—a handsome prince, all dressed in blue velvet—the dogs barked, Amelia shouted

PRINCESS VISITS THE REST HOUSE

with delight. The Prince stepped across to the Princess and took her hand in his. The stove stopped smoking immediately and gleamed and glowed all orange and red—and where was the aunt? There she was in Susannah's black dress carrying in the dogs' leg of mutton—not too badly burnt after all.

“Oh, I *am* obliged to you,” said the Prince, turning to the Princess's aunt and politely taking the mutton from her and putting it on a side-table for the dogs. (“Pray get on with your meal,” said the Princess to them—but they were far too much interested to obey).

“Well, as I was saying,” said the Prince, “I *am* so much obliged to you. Three years ago I *was* rather rude to the Fairy who kept the Rest House. She upset my cup of mulberry wine, and she said that rudeness to the Rest House keeper was quite unheard of—as I would soon see, as I must keep it till somebody was rude to me, and so I've tried my very hardest to annoy people. Three years,” he said, “I've waited for this happy day—and all my life for you,” he added, bowing politely to the Princess.

“Well,” said the aunt, “I shan't mind keeping the Rest House in the least. It's the kind of work I've been looking for all my life. It will be *much* easier than keeping 418 servants in order. I mean to keep the Rest House in a wonderful way—no one will ever speak rudely to me, and I shall stay here for ever I hope.”

At that moment in came the Fairy who had put on the spell.

“So you've got out of the charm,” she said to the Prince. “Really I must admit that you are not often rude—and I was perhaps a little careless—and I hear you like your new work,”

PRINCESS VISITS THE REST HOUSE

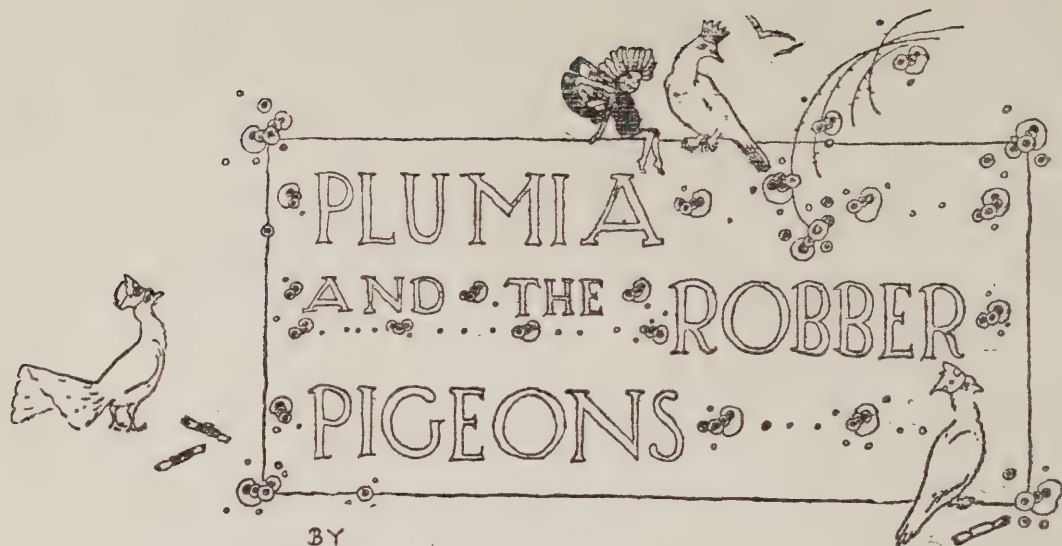
she went on, turning to the aunt, “ that is really very fortunate, everything appears to be most satisfactory.”

So the aunt opened the oysters (the Prince—who excelled at everything when he chose to exert himself—kindly helped her) and they all had supper. The dogs ate their mutton and enjoyed it very much.

Then the Fairy took them all away to the palace of the Princess’s father. The dogs went too, and lived at Court in future, and were very popular with everyone. The Princess, of course, married the Prince, as soon as the flags were put up in the town, and Amelia, having had a good view of the wedding, went home to her mother. The Fairy manages the servants at the palace and they never leave at all.

As for the unpleasant aunt, she looks after the Rest House in a most competent manner. There are no complaints.





GLADYS PETO

THEY were having tea on the lawn with Miss Binns. There were only two of them, Mary and Martin, Miss Binns was the governess. They were having jam sandwiches and a very good kind of cake. Everyone was behaving very elegantly but talking a good deal.

"It's nearly time," said Miss Binns at the end of Martin's long account of what he meant to plant in his garden next year, "that you asked Millicent Henderson to tea."

"Millicent Henderson to tea!" said Martin. "What a dreadful idea, it's only a tiny little while since we went there."

Mary said "I couldn't *bear* it."

And Miss Binns said "You must ask people back again when they have you to tea, it's a proper and polite thing to do."

"Well, the pigeons never have us back," said Martin. "And they come to tea every day."

And indeed they did, for the children had tea on the back lawn where the pigeon cote was, so of course the pigeons

PLUMIA AND THE ROBBER PIGEONS

improved their ordinary food, which was maize and so on, with crumbs of cake and things like that.

Mary and Martin finished their tea and Miss Binns took them off for a walk, and the pigeons were left to talk things over.

“ Well, we must certainly have them up to the house,” said Plumia the Fantail pigeon, who was a very important member of the pigeon community, “ I had been meaning to have them for some time. I’ll ask them this morning, they’re excellent children, I think. Whom have we asked already? Four of the daisy fairies and one of the Brown owls—oh, quite a small and select party, Mary and Martin must certainly come.”

It was nearly sunrise when Mary woke up and saw Plumia sitting on the end of her bed.

“ C-come to the pigeon c-cote,” cooed Plumia, “ come along to the party. There is the magic to take you,” and handed Mary a daisy.

Mary got up immediately and woke Martin too. He also took a daisy, and there they were both dressed in their best clothes and out on the window-sill with Plumia.

The next moment they landed at the front door of the pigeon cote. They saw it was now a very magnificent front door which they had never remarked before, with a doormat and scraper and all complete.

“ Though I don’t believe it would fit pigeons’ feet,” thought Martin.

Plumia took them into a large dining-room, furnished in a rather old-fashioned way with a red wall-paper and pictures of distinguished pigeons. A great many real pigeons, the four daisy fairies, an owl and a few other birds were drinking coffee



Having tea on the lawn

PLUMIA AND THE ROBBER PIGEONS

and eating cakes. The table was pushed back against the wall as it is at a party, and it was crowded with plates of cakes and that kind of thing. Everyone ate a great deal and then pulled crackers. The pigeons put the caps on their heads and the fairies danced about.

Games were then suggested and everybody chose a game. Mary voted for "Hide and Seek all-over-the-house," just because she wanted to see the rest of the pigeon cote and find out where the kitchen was and how they cooked the cakes, but the fairies all shouted for flying races and flying races it was. Mary and Martin found they flew quite well, though not well enough to win a race. During the Flying Bun Race (you have to fly with a bun on your head and it's terribly difficult—much worse than an egg and spoon race) Martin suddenly saw smoke coming out of the kitchen chimney which meant people were getting up, so they said it had been a charming party but they really must be going, and home they went. It hardly seemed worth while to undress when they knew they had got to dress again so soon, but they found themselves in bed *and* all undressed. However, it really *was* true; upon each bed was a faded daisy.

Now that is the Plumia part of the story, and so we come to the Robber Pigeons.

Up the hill and beyond the house of Mary and Martin lived old Mr. Montagu. He had a very ancient house and he looked very, very old. In his garden was an old, old pigeon cote, a sort of little house built of stone and brick, and it held hundreds of pigeons. It had been there very many years when there weren't so many butchers about as there are now, and no motor delivery vans at all, and often you couldn't easily

PLUMIA AND THE ROBBER PIGEONS

get meat and so your cook made a great pigeon pie. Though not, you may be sure, of magic pigeons like Plumia. Well, old Mr. Montagu had crowds of pigeons in his pigeon house and some of these were Robber Pigeons which he'd brought from Egypt.

These wicked pigeons are trained to steal other people's birds and bring them home to their master's pigeon cotes. They fly round and round them and under and over them and so bring them away from their own homes.

The morning after the pigeon party Mary again woke up in the dawn and found a pigeon perched on the end of the bed. But it was not Plumia this time, but one of the other ordinary pigeons.

"C-can you c-come and help us?" it cooed tearfully, and it explained that Plumia had been taken away by old Mr. Montagu's robber pigeons in just the way I explained.

"Well, I'll do the best I can," said Mary. "Martin and I will go and ask for her back," and she went to sleep again.

After breakfast she told Martin what had happened and they decided to go to see Mr. Montagu that afternoon. They were quite often allowed to go out alone for though Martin wasn't very old, Mary was ten and a half.

It was a very hot day and a long dusty walk, all uphill. Mr. Montagu had an old grey house, long and low, and a fine garden with a grey wall round it, and the pigeon house at the corner of the wall farthest from the road. There was a drive up to the house with lilac trees growing and farther up some dark yew trees. Mary and Martin felt rather frightened.



PLUMIA AND THE ROBBER PIGEONS

They didn't go to the front door which looked very forbidding, but walked very slowly across the lawn where they saw a French window open.

They peeped into the room and there was Mr. Montagu working at a great desk. He had a frown on his face and looked as cross as usual.

Mary and Martin scuffled their feet and said, "Oh, please——" feeling quite happy inside, because they'd read a great many stories about cross old gentlemen who, when visited by deserving children, either rich or poor, became kind immediately and gave them everything you can think of, from honey for tea to ponies to ride on. However, Mr. Montagu wasn't at all like that, he just said, "What do you want, you abominable children? Anyhow you can't have it, you must go away immediately, good-bye." And so there was nothing to be done but *go* away, which they did, feeling very sad and wishing that they lived in a book as they walked slowly home again under the yew trees.

However, before they came out into the sunshine again whom should they see sitting on a yew bough but Plumia herself. There was another pigeon with her and one of the daisy fairies.

"C-can you be looking for me?" said Plumia. "I have *never* seen such fussy people as my relations! I suppose they are getting up search parties and behaving in every kind of ridiculous way. As a matter of fact I have just got married, and as my husband lives at Mr. Montagu's pigeon cote I shall have to live there too, of course, but I shall frequently come home to see them. Please tell them I preferred to have the wedding quite private. This daisy fairy kindly married us, all the best pigeons have daisy fairies to marry them. I suppose,"

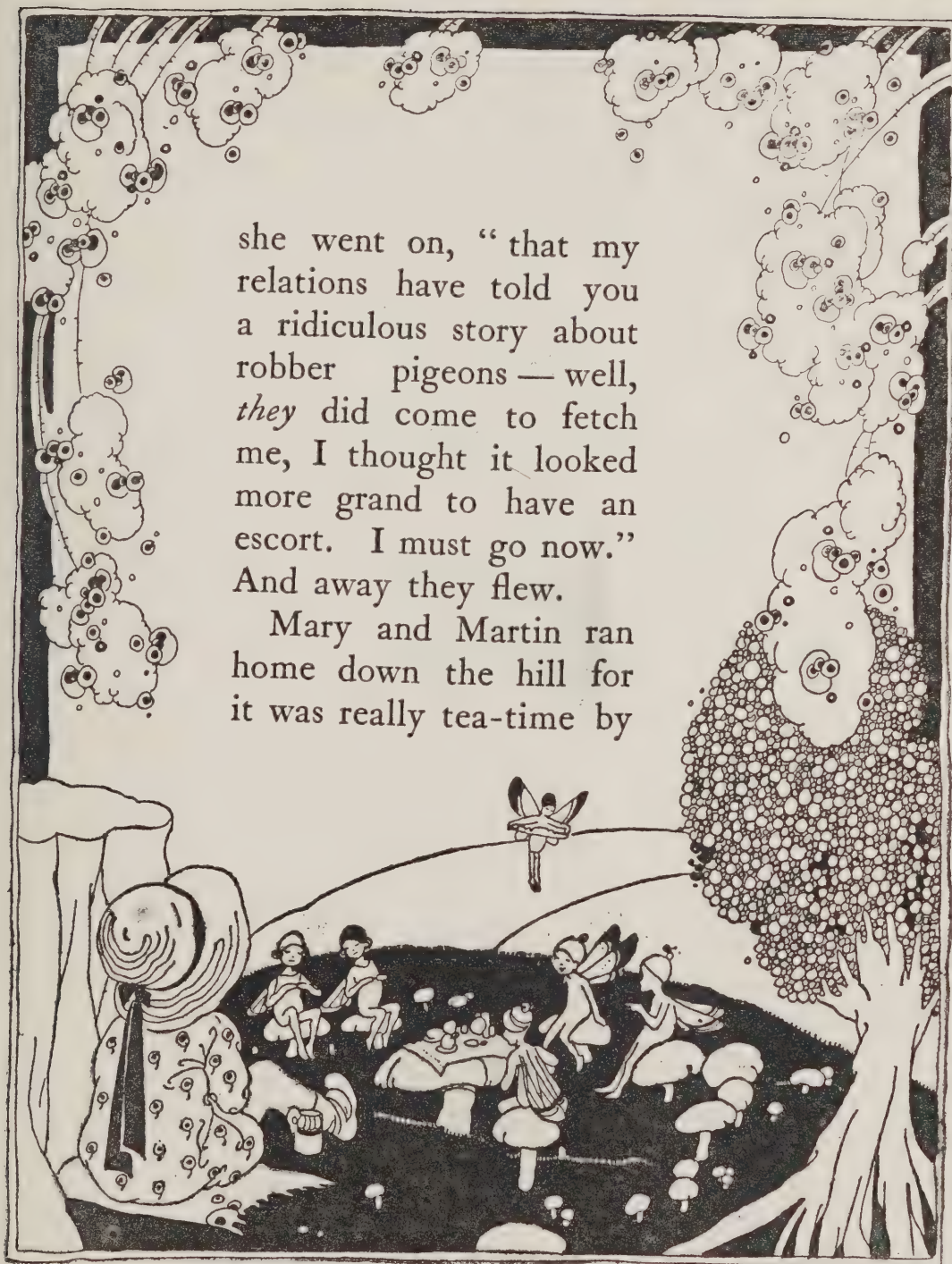


'Crumbs of cake, and things like that.'

Plumia and the Robber Pigeons

she went on, "that my relations have told you a ridiculous story about robber pigeons — well, *they* did come to fetch me, I thought it looked more grand to have an escort. I must go now." And away they flew.

Mary and Martin ran home down the hill for it was really tea-time by



GLADYS PETO-

PLUMIA AND THE ROBBER PIGEONS

now, and recited Plumia's message under the pigeon cote, but the pigeons took no notice and have never spoken since. However, Plumia and her husband frequently visit her relations and all their children come as well.

Mr. Montagu is as disagreeable as ever, and Mary and Martin *have* to have Millicent Henderson to tea sometimes.



A girl with dark hair, wearing a sleeveless dress with a floral pattern, stands on a dark, irregular shape representing a shadow or a patch of ground. She is reaching her arms up towards a small fairy with large, patterned wings. The fairy is flying away from the girl. The scene is decorated with small, stylized flowers and leaves. A rectangular box with a decorative border contains the text 'A FAIRY FLUTTERED DOWN'.

A FAIRY
FLUTTERED
DOWN

I THOUGHT, perhaps, a bird
might come
To eat the cake I held that day—
Instead, a fairy fluttered down,
Wished me good
luck—and flew
away.

GLADYS PETO



THERE was once a cat who was often to be found in a small and unimportant garden, in an out of the way village, so unknown that I need not mention its name.

The cat was small too, but it had a great sense of its own importance, a loud voice, a long tail and two secrets. Both of these latter the cat, who was called Howler, kept absolutely to itself, although the dog, who lived in the garden also, suspected the nature of one of them.

The first might be called the secret of Constant Meals, and I will now reveal it.

First, however, you must note that I have said that Howler *was often to be found* in the garden, not that he *lived* there, although the owners of the garden imagined that the latter was the case. They also imagined that they owned Howler but they were wrong in both suppositions. For he owned himself and lived anywhere he pleased; in several other

THE CAT TREE

gardens and houses for instance, and this was the secret of constant meals.

He had, in fact, a number of different homes and in each was regarded by the people who lived there as their own cat.

Howler did not in the least mind them thinking this as long as they fed him, and he managed his visits to each house so skilfully that none of his owners suspected anything.

You might, however, call the house belonging to the garden I am speaking of, his permanent address, because he returned there often and spent most time there. All great travellers have some favourite spot where they will turn up sooner or later.

In the corner of the garden, Howler had his own special tree, which we will call, "The Cat tree," and would sometimes entertain his friends to music in its comfortable branches.

It was his custom to have his first supper in Cat Tree House, before going on to his second place for another. After this he usually had a little snack of something at his third place, where he also slept and took his first breakfast. He had a fourth place, which as a rule provided him with one of his dinners and he usually returned to Cat Tree House for another. This was his more regular round, but there were other houses which he occasionally visited. You see how easy it is with a little care and arrangement to get constant meals once you have got a number of people to believe they own you.

The people at Cat Tree House used to say to their friends:

"Our cat Howler always spends the night in the garden," and the owners of the place where he really slept said:

"Tom" (for that is what they called him there) "only turns up for his supper and to sleep. We can never find him

THE CAT TREE

during the day.” The people who gave him his second breakfast said:

“ Tib never seems hungry, I believe someone must be *feeding him*.” And the folk in his less regular homes which he only occasionally visited said:

“ We hardly ever see our cat nowadays, I do hope he is getting enough to eat.”

The system, of course, had a few drawbacks. There was, for example, a tiresome lady who used to shut Howler up for fear he should get lost and whose house he used to have to leave by a chimney, a messy business which he hated. Things also were complicated by the stupid habit many people had of keeping pet dogs who often finished up cats' meals before the cats had even begun them.

Howler hated and despised all dogs and in particular the one who lived at Cat Tree House. The latter barked in a harsh, incessant and unnecessary way, and was always chasing Howler about the garden and up trees. It is annoying to be chased up a tree; but the annoyance is nothing compared to that felt when there is no tree to be chased up. This was why Howler spent so much time in his own tree which I have already mentioned, for it has been proved that a cat already in a tree cannot be chased up a tree.

The cat tree was a particularly good one for purposes of escape. It was close to a low wall which provided a start, and it had a great many branches near together and large leaves which entirely hid one from sight, and last but not least, held the second and greater secret of Total Disappearance.

Howler had discovered this secret quite accidentally one day when he had jumped into it, after a narrow escape (the



He used to leave by the chimney

THE CAT TREE

twelfth that day) from the dog. The latter had leaped so high after him that he had supposed that it was climbing the tree in pursuit. Much agitated, he climbed higher and higher. He climbed for several minutes and was surprised to find that he still had not reached the top because from the garden the tree appeared to be but a small one. He was evidently, however, a long way from the ground, because the noise of barking was getting quite faint in the distance, and when at length the blue sky showed through the thick leaves, it had ceased altogether.

From the topmost branch of the tree, he was able to see clearly and what he saw was a complete surprise. Instead of the garden, there was nothing in view but the tops of other trees and he was evidently in the middle of a dense wood. The trees indeed were so close to one another that it was an easy jump to the branches of the next, and Howler was able to go from tree to tree until he reached the edge of what appeared to be a clearing or gap in the woods.

In this gap the ground below was covered by short grass like a lawn and on it were several tiny buildings like miniature houses. There were also a number of cats engaged in various ways, some sitting down to wash in the sun, others sitting talking to their friends, and still others just sitting down.

He climbed quickly down the tree trunk and approached nearer, keeping a sharp look out for any sign of dogs being in the vicinity. He heard no barking, however, and the other cats looked so peaceful that there was evidently none anywhere near. The next thing Howler thought of was food: not that he was hungry. He had had his third breakfast only a short while before. It was just habit and he had few other real hobbies.

THE CAT TREE

He addressed himself to a large black cat.

“Is there any food to be had?” he said, “any meat, fish or milk?”

“Plenty over there,” answered the black cat, and waved his tail towards one of the little houses, from which came, surely enough, an appetising smell of fish.

“I have all I want, otherwise I should not have told you, but there is plenty left. Where do you come from?”

“I was chased up a tree by a wretched dog,” said Howler, “when I was walking in one of several gardens which belong to me, and when I got to the top, found I was in a wood and came along the tree-tops until I got here.”

“That is how we all came here,” said the black cat. “You have to be very careful, when you want to go back, to find the right tree top, otherwise you may find yourself anywhere. I climbed down the wrong tree once and found myself in a field where a pack of hounds was being exercised. Had it not been for the fact that I am very valiant and powerful, things might have gone hard with me. I am called Hector,” he added, “because of my great courage.”

“How did you escape?” asked Howler. Hector might be brave but he did not look a very truthful cat.

“I fought my way back to the tree, disputing every inch against fearful odds,” said Hector. “Three hounds I killed outright, and the rest in the end fled with the huntsman. On another occasion——” But Howler was already walking towards the building from which the smell came. It was evidently a kind of cats’ restaurant. Hector followed.

“As I was saying——” he began. His audience, however, paid no attention, his mind being fixed on higher things.

THE CAT TREE

Whether the cats' meat or the fish was the higher, it would be impossible to say. They were both very high.

Howler was stopped in the doorway, by an untidy-looking black and white cat, with an ill-tempered expression.

"Have you a ticket?" it said, in a rude voice.

"No," replied Howler.

"No one ever has," exclaimed Black and White angrily.

"Then why do you ask?"

"Just curiosity," said Black and White, "I have nothing to do with this place really," and it went back to a fish head it was worrying.

"I forgot to mention," said the voice of Hector just as Howler was beginning to enjoy a piece of raw liver, "that I own several large gardens and houses in the village I come from. I practically never have two meals in the same place. People are so proud to have me visit them that they press food upon me."

"Then why do you bother to come here," said Howler with his mouth full.

"It suits me to get a little quiet and escape from human attentions. They make a dreadful fuss of me. Besides, I have my duties here. I have been appointed overseer."

"Liar!" shouted all the other cats in a chorus of yowls. They then went on eating.

Hector did not appear to be put out. He merely said, "Very mixed crowd come here for week-ends. Hardly a cat I would be seen sharing a saucer with. Ah well, I will be getting home to my lunch."

"Yes, do," said all the other cats in a chorus, in which Howler joined.

The latter after a good meal and a thorough wash went to

THE CAT TREE

sleep in the warm sunshine. He had a bad dream however. He dreamt that some other cat was going to steal one of the suppers which were waiting for him. He awoke, trembling with fear which did not grow less on waking. What if it were really true? An overpowering sense of something amiss impelled him to return to his garden. He lost no time but began to jump from tree to tree in the direction whence he had come. He eventually found the right one, not, however, before descending in his alarm, one wrong one, and getting into a school playground full of boys with catapults.

The second attempt was more successful, and as he climbed down the tree, he heard a familiar bark, and presently was able to see his enemy the dog bouncing about the garden, in a state of great excitement.

It suddenly made a dash at something inside a bush. Simultaneously a black object dashed out on the other side and into



"Have you got a ticket?"

THE CAT TREE

the cat tree, which it ascended with incredible speed, and it was not until it had reached the branch on which Howler was sitting that he recognised it to be a cat, and no other cat than his new acquaintance Hector.

“ Oh, what a dreadful dog,” the latter sobbed. “ So large and so fierce. It has given me palpitations of the heart.”

“ What were you doing in this garden? ” demanded Howler.

“ Oh, it belongs to me,” said Hector. “ I had just dropped in for a bite of supper. There was a lovely plate all ready for me. The people are so dutiful. I take many meals here.”

Howler nearly fell off the tree in his fury on hearing this.

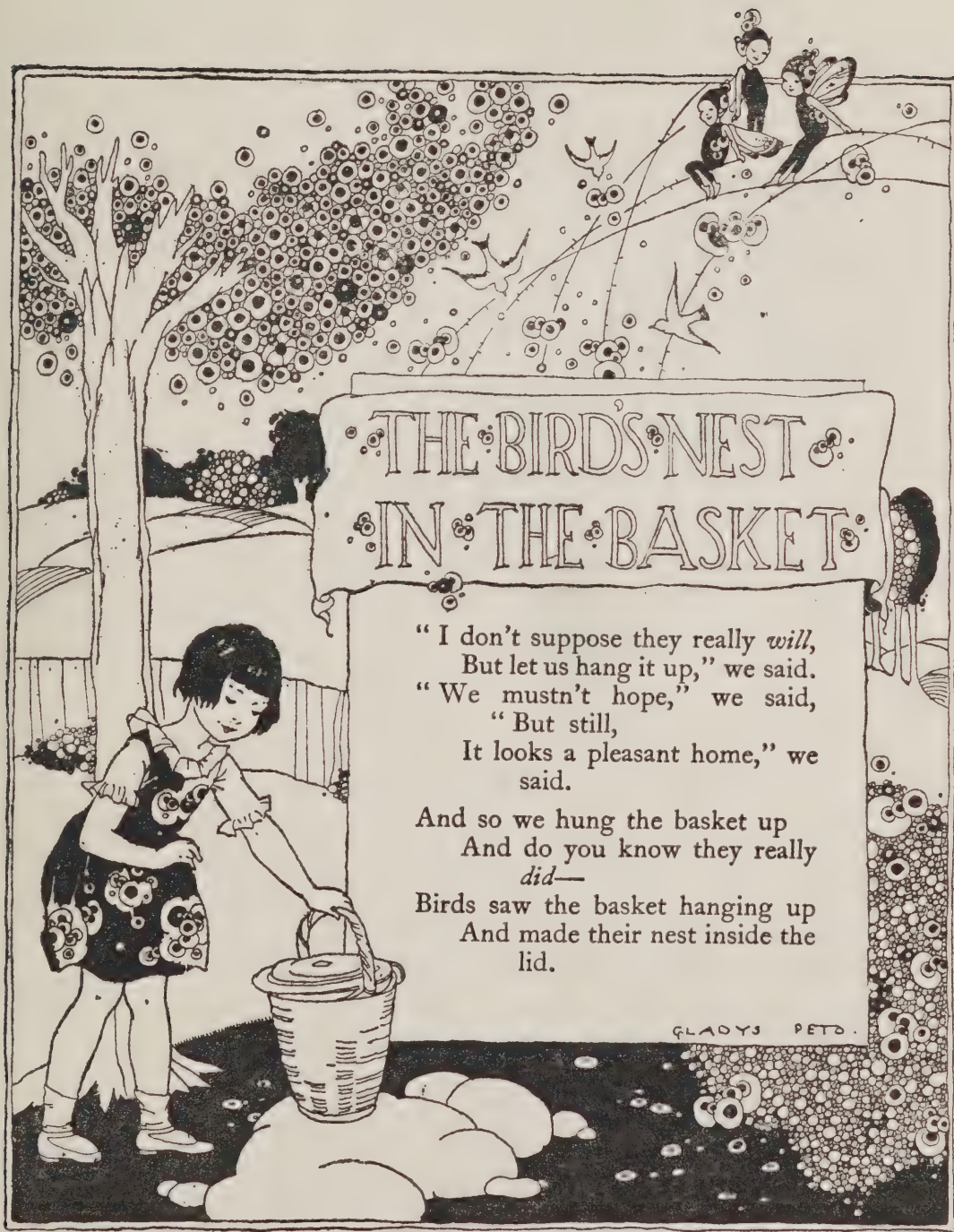
“ Get out ! ” he screamed. “ Get out, get——” I can’t tell you all he said, but it ended in a cat fight in the tree, in which the dog did his utmost to join but in vain.

In a very short time Hector was defeated, and for all his boasting, put to an ignominious flight.

So Howler got his supper after all.

He still visits the cats’ garden occasionally, but ever since the above happening, has taken the precaution of finishing up all the meals in the neighbourhood before going there.





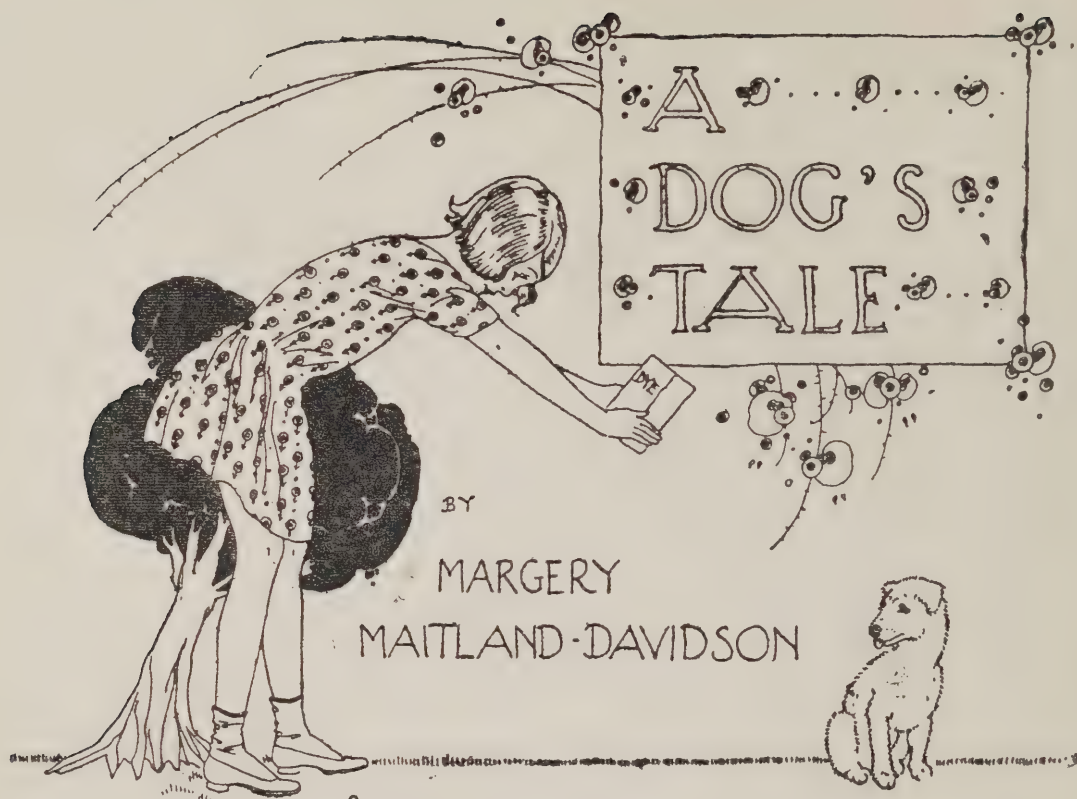
THE BIRD'S NEST IN THE BASKET

"I don't suppose they really *will*,
But let us hang it up," we said.
"We mustn't hope," we said,
"But still,
It looks a pleasant home," we
said.

And so we hung the basket up
And do you know they really
did—

Birds saw the basket hanging up
And made their nest inside the
lid.

GLADYS PETO.



POOR Bits, the wire-haired terrier puppy, was in trouble again.

"Really," said Jack, as he gazed in admiration at Bits' pretty white coat simply covered in black mud, "really, I couldn't possibly get dirtier than that myself. Even when I fell down in the tarred road, I didn't get so completely all over grubby like that."

But Betty, the housemaid, thought otherwise.

"I never knew such a dog," she wailed. "He looks like a nigger dog, that he does."

"Do niggers have black dogs?" asked Eliza.

"Of course they do," said Betty decidedly. "And Chinamen have yellow ones, and Red Indians have red ones."

"Do they?" Eliza's eyes were wide open with surprise. Jack poked Eliza in the ribs.

A DOG'S TALE

"Don't you believe it, Eliza," he whispered to his sister. "It's only a 'make-up' of Betty's."

But for all that, poor Bits was doomed to another bath. Mother insisted, and when she was really decided, things had got to be done.

Even Betty was sorry for Bits in the end as he stood shakily and sorrowfully in the tub in the kitchen, looking like a tiny drowned rat or a miniature horse, while Betty rubbed and rubbed till her arms were simply aching, and her red hair came unloosed and the pins fell into the water.

Eliza had never seen Betty's hair all down before.

"Look, Jack," she whispered. "Do you like the colour of Betty's hair?"

Jack sniffed. A chap really couldn't be expected to notice silly things like that.

"No," he answered shortly and decidedly.

"Are you quite sure, Jacky?" inquired Eliza gently, but with a mischievous gleam in her eye which Jack had learnt to take notice of.

"Come on, Eliza, let's have it," he said, as he led her into a quiet corner. "What's the joke?"

Eliza rubbed one hand gently with the other.

"I was only thinking," she murmured, "how sweet Bits would look with a coat the same colour as Betty's hair. Besides, it wouldn't show the dirt, and poor old Bits would be so much happier if he didn't have to be washed so often."

Jack wished he had thought of this himself. It made girls uppish to have everything their own way. But he didn't quite see what Eliza was driving at.

"I think one person in the house with hair like Betty's is

A DOG'S TALE

enough," he proclaimed stoutly. "Besides, how could you make it red?"

"There's always a dye to be had. Mother used one for my overall the other day and I know there's some left. Besides, Bits would like to look different, I know he would."

"Well," said Jack with grudging consent, "I don't mind as long as I am the one to pour the dye over him. I won't do it if you boss the show."

"'Course not. I'll go and fetch the stuff. We'll do it in the garden, in the old zinc bath Betty catches rain-water in."

Meanwhile Bits, released from Betty's hands, tore madly into the garden, barking loudly and rubbing himself on all the dirty sticks and trees he could find.



A DOG'S TALE

"Bits," called Jack, "would you like to be a little red-haired dog and be like Queen Elizabeth? She had red hair, you know."

Bits ran up to him and barked.

"And it certainly won't pick up the dirt like a white one," said Eliza, as she came running up with a packet in her hand.

The mixing of the dye was great fun. Jack was all for making it a deep red, as he said the sun was sure to fade it, but Eliza thought a paler colour would be considered so much more artistic. When they had at last more or less agreed on the colour, Bits was caught, after a rare chase, and didn't seem particularly pleased at the prospect of more water. Ungrateful of him, Eliza said, as she held his back legs firmly while Jack splashed the red water thoroughly over him.

Unfortunately a wave of dye came up, urged by Bits' front paws, and hit Eliza bang on the nose.

She let Bits' hind legs go.

"Oh, oh," she cried, "I shall have a red nose for the rest of my life!"

"Don't be so beastly vain," shouted Jack. "Think of poor old Bits. He'll be all patchy now if you don't keep him under."

But Bits was never one to lose an opportunity. A good kick and a shake, and he was out of the bath and running full tilt towards the house.

"Like a scarlet runner," laughed Jack.

Bits had come out in shades of light and dark red, rather like a poppy.

"Look out," screamed Eliza, "he's making for the drawing-room. Stop him for goodness' sake. Mother's got some people to tea."

A DOG'S TALE

Of course it was unfortunate that Mrs. Fluffy Furbilow should have had a new white dress on, and that old Mrs. Pettigew had donned her latest lavender silk dress for the occasion. But Bits didn't appear to notice anything, he seemed too anxious to show everybody how smart he looked in his new coat.

He rushed into the drawing-room like a little red ball, leaving a streaky, wet, red trail behind him, and hurtled himself gleefully on to Mrs. Fluffy Furbilow's white lap.

Jack and Eliza, although terribly nervous of the consequences, couldn't resist peeping round the door. Somehow, also, they were unable to help giggling at the sight of the ladies' horrified faces.

"Oh, my gracious goodness!" flustered Mrs. Pettigew, as Bits, finding Mrs. Fluffy Furbilow distinctly dull, because she had fainted with distress and hadn't given him even a pat, turned his attention to the old lady and settled himself comfortably on the folds of her silk skirt lying on the floor round her feet.

After all, it really didn't matter to him that wherever he went he splashed red dye everywhere.

Jack and Eliza's mother remained too dumbfounded to speak for several seconds. At first she didn't even recognise Bits in his red coat. But she soon recovered herself, and sent Eliza flying for the smelling salts for Mrs. Fluffy Furbilow, while Jack was ordered to pick up Bits from Mrs. Pettigew's skirt.

"My little dog would never *think* of doing such a thing," snarled the old lady severely. "He is a well brought up little dog, *he* is." She looked at Bits with eyes like daggers. But the little puppy was completely shameless and didn't seem

A DOG'S TALE

to care one scrap. He just snuggled his black nose, which was the only part of him that had remained its proper colour, closer into Jack's neck.

"What *shall* I do? What *shall* I do?" wailed Mrs. Fluffy when she had finished fainting, and was being led from the house.

It was after the two upset ladies had gone, that Eliza and Jack knew that they would have to face the music in the shape of their extremely irate mamma, although Eliza declared that she saw a ghost of a smile on her lips when Bits leapt on to Mrs. Fluffy's lap.

They had been wondering what their punishment would be. Jack thought bed and Eliza guessed more lessons. But it wasn't either. Their mother listened quietly to their explanations before she pronounced sentence.

Not only were they to save their money to give the two ladies a present, because they had been the means of spoiling their dresses, but they were to have no sweets of any kind until Bits was his natural colour again.

During the days that followed, Jack wished, oh, so fervently, that he had not insisted on *deep* red dye. It took such ages and ages to wear off. And the baths that Bits had were—well—uncountable. But Bits himself did his best for them. He stood the baths quite happily, and by Christmas he had shed his puppy coat and had grown an entirely brand-new white one. So that in the end everyone was happy, and no one prouder of their white dog than Eliza and Jack. And as Bits got older and wiser he didn't get so dirty. That's what happens to children too, doesn't it?

THE PRINCESS MIRROR

BY
BERTA RUCK



THERE was once
a milkman's son who
studied to become a Magician.

A milkman's
son who studied
to become a
Magician.....

When he got through all the examinations in magic, he snatched up the Cap-of-Darkness, which made him invisible, and went out into the world to try experiments.

The first thing to do, thought he, is to grant the wish of some Princess. So he whisked himself into the nearest Palace where lived the Princess, Iola (then a tiny girl).

She was standing on tiptoe on a golden footstool before the ante-room mirror. She wanted to get a good view of her new greeny-blue brocade frock. But she was too tiny to catch sight of more than the crown of her golden head.

She sighed aloud—"I *wish* I could see myself!"

"Granted," said the Magician politely though inaudibly. And still unheard, unseen, he muttered a charm to bestow upon the Princess "The power of seeing herself *wherever she looked*."



But she was too tiny

THE PRINCESS' MIRROR

Now an experienced Magician would have known better. *This* Magician was just a beginner. Also, he had so little originality that his next act was to whisk himself into the next kingdom (which lay on the other side of the sea) in order to grant a wish of the *Prince*.

This Prince's name was Egon. He was a handsome boy who thought of nothing but his one ambition. This was to be the greatest naval commander the world had ever known.

Navies were his toys. When the Magician saw Egon, he was sitting at a table spread with a great map of the Blue sea beyond his kingdom. Moving tiny model battleships, torpedoes, and destroyers up and down the paper, he was too absorbed to wish for anything, aloud.

"Ahem!" cried the Magician. He threw off his Cap-of-Darkness and became visible.

The Prince stared. "Who are *you*?"

"A Magician."

Prince Egon growled, "You *look* more like a milkman."

"Milkman, yourself," snapped the Magician, now pale with rage. For he was the first of his family who was not in the dairy-trade. "Do you know I passed first-class in the wish-granting section of the sorcery exam? Let me show you. Wish something now, and I'll make it happen."

"I wish you'd go," growled the Prince.

"Right," retorted the Magician. "But first, just to spite you I'll grant the real wish of your heart."

"You can't guess it, milkboy."

"Oh, can't I, sea-urchin? *Very* well. 'You shall lord it over the sea that borders your kingdom, and every blue wave of it shall reflect your image until men know it as Prince Egon's Mirror.' And much good may it do you. Good-day!"

THE PRINCESS' MIRROR

II

Years went by. Tiny Princess Iola grew up into a tall maiden, lovely from the crown of her head to the soles of her feet, which were so dainty that her long golden curls grew down to kiss them.



Her long golden curls

Nobody else wanted to kiss her, beautiful as she was. For she was peevish-tempered, with little to say for herself except that she thought the world was a very dull place. No wonder she thought so, since the Magician's spell upon her forced her to see *herself* wherever she looked! If she gazed up into the sky, there were her own blue eyes. Her own hair waved as she watched the waving of the ripened corn. She could not even see apple blossom in spring because of the reflection of her own pink and white face, that always, always came between.

Of course nobody knew about the Magician. People only said, "Why does the

THE PRINCESS' MIRROR

Princess spoil her beauty by putting on that sulky expression? Why does she bore her friends by talking about her own low spirits? She thinks of nothing but herself!" So the Prince Charming who had been sent to marry her would have nothing to do with her, choosing instead quite a plain Princess, whose eyes lighted up with joy at her lover's approach. There was no joy in the weary blue eyes of Princess Iola—haunted, wherever she turned, by her own image, of which she was so deadly sick.

One day she confessed her unhappiness to the Court Fool (because he always forgot everything he was told half-an-hour after he had heard it). So she felt safe in saying to him that she was the most miserable girl in the kingdom. "Why can't I be as gay as any of my Maids-of-honour?" said she. "I am as young as they are, and *much* prettier! Yet—yet!"

The Fool said gravely, "Methinks there is an evil charm upon you, Princess."

"What then?"

The Fool said: "Methinks there must be, somewhere, a counter-charm to cure you; and in your place, methinks I should search the wide world until I found it!"

"And supposing you never did find it?"

"Why, then, methinks, I should drown myself!" retorted the Court Fool; and he ran off shaking his bells.

The Princess commanded her Maids-of-honour to pack a wallet and to fetch a mother-of-pearl alpenstock. She was about to set off on a long pilgrimage, alone.

None of them cared twopence.

III

She walked and walked and walked until her feet were



Asking questions

THE PRINCESS' MIRROR

blistered. Her tongue was sore with asking questions of the country people. These good people, hearing that she saw the reflection of herself wherever she looked, thought she must be moonstruck and begged her to go home.

She walked on and on until she saw her reflection growing sunburnt; then she sat down and hid her face.

Although she was only on the cliff that bordered the kingdom, she felt she had come to the world's end!

"There *is* no counter-charm," wept the tired Princess miserably. "There is nothing for me to do but take the fool's advice, throw myself over the cliff and drown myself!"

So she got up, still hiding her face. For she knew that if she looked down she would only see that miserable reflection of hers, of which she was so tired, in the waters where she was seeking rest. Then she imagined how the fishermen would probably find her and draw up in their nets the lifeless form of a beautiful Princess, and she thought she must give just one more look at herself, for good-bye——

Opening her eyes she peeped over the cliff side. Then she screamed aloud! but not with fright, with joy!

For the first time she saw a reflection that was not her own!

There, in the blue waves, was the image of a stranger; a tall, handsome young man whose face she had never seen before.

And when at last she raised her eyes again the spell was gone. She gazed upon the blue sky, upon the round white clouds, the green turf, and all the lovely world, unshadowed by any image of herself.

Now Prince Egon, who was on his yacht in the bay, demanded—"Who is that on the cliff?"



GLADYS PETO -

Knelt down on the deck

THE PRINCESS' MIRROR

The sailors said, " May it please your Royal Highness, it is the young woman who has been sitting there all day gazing into your Royal Highness's Mirror."

For it was thus that sailors named the sea (which, thanks to that Magician, always reflected Prince Egon's image).

" Put off a boat," he ordered. " Let her be brought before me."

So the Princess was brought to the Prince's yacht.

Bluntly the Prince asked her, " Why do you spend all your time gazing at my image in the water? "

" I can't help it," murmured Princess Iola, with her eyes now fastened upon the Prince's own face. For at last she had found something to interest her.

" Am I so wonderful? " he asked, pleased.

" You are more wonderful than anything I have ever seen ! " whispered the Princess. " You have taken away the evil charm. It has changed the look of the whole world for me, merely to have seen your reflection in the water."

" Really? " said Prince Egon. " *You* are not so bad-looking, yourself. Are you a princess? Yes? That's lucky. You may become mine, if you like."

Princess Iola knelt down on the deck to kiss his boots; and so they became engaged.

IV

By the time the story got round to the Magician he had made so many other mistakes that his indignant parents forced him to give up magic and become a milkman again. His friends told him that it was all his fault that the beautiful princess, so gay and charming (as she now was) was married to

THE PRINCESS' MIRROR

the most selfish Prince who ever lived. *Surely* she deserved a better fate?

“You can’t have a better fate than to marry the Prince you *want*,” explained the ex-Magician meekly. “And no *other* sort of prince possessed the counter-charm.”



THE GOLDEN ROBES



ONCE there lived a woodman who went every day to fell trees in a great forest.

One day he went as usual to his work and laboured till noon, when he paused to eat his scanty dinner. As he was eating, there came, faint but clear, to his ears a sweet voice.

"Oh, kind sir," said the voice, "I pray you set me free."

"And who are you?" asked the woodman, who could see nobody.

"I am a fairy," said the voice, "I am imprisoned in this beech-tree; if you cut it down you can set me free."

"And if I do, how will you reward me?" asked the woodman, who was not a kindly man.

"I will spin three beautiful golden robes out of sunbeams," said the Fairy.

"Then I agree," said the woodman. He took his axe to the tree, and an hour later returned home with the Fairy in his pocket.

The Fairy kept his word. He wove the most beautiful and

THE GOLDEN ROBES

dazzling garments that were ever seen, stiff, as cloth-of-gold should be.

“And now,” he said, when the task was finished, “you must let me go.”

But the woodman and his wife looked at each other. “It would be silly,” said the man, “to let him go when by keeping him he will make our fortunes.”

The wife agreed, so they put the Fairy in a mousetrap and kept him working, early and late, till the cottage was stacked with shining garments. Then the woodman took them to the distant city to sell them in the market-place. Now the Fairy was very angry, and he thought out a plan of revenge. Into each robe as he made it he wove a spell, so that as soon as the



The woodman who was not a kindly man

THE GOLDEN ROBES

wearer should put on the garment it should turn once more into the sunbeams from which it had been made.

The woodman, knowing nothing of this, went to market, and it happened that as he sat with his wares, the King's son rode by. It happened also that the Prince was about to take a journey into a distant country, where he was to be betrothed to the daughter of the King, a Princess who, to judge by her portrait, was very beautiful. The Prince saw the glittering finery displayed by the woodman, and at once he thought what a fine figure he would look in these clothes to appear before the Princess, with whom he was already half in love. So he stopped and bought a large stock of the fairy garments, and sent them back to the palace by his servant. The next day he started on his journey, and unfortunately he had not had time to try on the new wardrobe. So, all unsuspecting, he travelled for several weeks, and arrived at the end of his journey at the close of a bright afternoon.

The Princess, watching the arrival of the procession from her window, thought the Prince was very attractive.

At dinner that night the Prince wore a sober suit of velvet, thinking that he would keep the glories of his cloth-of-gold until the next day. By the close of the meal he was completely in love with the pretty Princess, and the young people parted very happy and contented with each other.

There was another thing about the King's household arrangements which the Prince liked. A quantity of clotted cream had been served at dinner and clotted cream was unknown in the country of the Prince. "I will have my cooks taught how to make this," he thought.

It had been arranged that on the next day the Prince and Princess should be betrothed. It was to be a public ceremony.

THE GOLDEN ROBES

The Prince went to be dressed, and his servants laid out the fairy robes. When he had decided which he should wear, the servants robed him in the glittering garments. They fell about his figure stiff and heavy but splendid beyond belief—for an instant only. For a breathing-space he stood there, a very dazzling figure. Then the glory of the garments melted into nothing. The servants, speechless with surprise, were grasping the empty air. The Prince in horrified amazement saw that not so much as a gossamer thread remained of those wonderful garments. They had no more substance than the sunbeams from which they had been made. The Prince tried the other robes. The result was the same. The glorious raiment, when taken to wear, became less than air, less visible than smoke.

The Prince remembered with dismay that he had no other suit except the velvet suit he had worn the previous night. Time was passing. The Prince decided to see the King and tell him the whole story.

But now there was more misfortune in store for him. The King did not believe his story, and fell into a great rage.

“What a tale to bring!” he cried, “I don’t believe one word of it! You have insulted my family! Are you not ashamed of yourself? Leave my city within an hour, or I will have you thrown into my deepest dungeon.”

He would listen to no arguments, and would not permit the Prince to take leave of the Princess. So it happened that the Princess, carefully robed by her ladies, and waiting to be summoned to the ceremony, was visited instead by the angry King, who told her that there was to be no betrothal, that he had banished her suitor, and, in fact, told her the whole story of what had happened. “As for his story, it is nonsense,” he

THE GOLDEN ROBES

finished, "and I am not sure that it would not have been better to have put him into my dungeons."

At first the Princess thought she would forget about the Prince, but as the days and weeks went by she realised that this was impossible. She wanted to see him to tell him that she believed his story. At last, when it came to her ears that her father had chosen for her another suitor, she decided to leave home, and to journey to the distant country where her lover lived.

So one day she dressed herself in cotton and cambric and a serge hood, and taking with her a faithful servant named Rose, and all her money and jewellery, she set out on her perilous journey.

For weeks the two girls travelled a hard and trying road, but at length they arrived in the neighbourhood of the Prince's capital, and saw the towers of his palace, just as dusk was falling.

"There is the end of our journey," said Rose, "let us go and tell the Prince that you have come."

But the Princess shrank back. "I could not," she faltered, "it may be that he has wedded another Princess by now."

"Then where shall we go?" said Rose. "The night is at hand."

As she spoke an old peasant-woman came up. She saw how tired the travellers looked.

"Will you accept the shelter of my cottage?" she asked; "you will be welcome."

The Princess and her maid were very glad to accept the hospitality of the old woman. But that night, while the Princess slept, Rose lay awake trying to think of a way to earn



On other days the disguised Princess would go—



"I don't believe it tastes very good"

some money before the little that remained to them should be spent, and in the end she thought of a way.

The next morning the Princess slept late, but Rose was up at sunrise. With the last of their money she bought some pailfuls of milk from a neighbouring farm. Then she set to work to prepare some clotted cream. When the cream was ready she would take it to market. Rose's plan worked very well. The cream sold in the city. With the money obtained

THE GOLDEN ROBES

for it more milk could be bought. Sometimes Rose would take the cream to market herself. On other days the disguised Princess would go, while Rose prepared the next supply.

Now all this time the Prince was very unhappy. He thought about the Princess, and his face began to look so sad that his father noticed it, and inquired the reason. The Prince did not wish to tell the real cause of his low spirits, so he said lightly, "Why, I miss the clotted cream that I hoped to have had my cooks taught to make."

"If that is all," said the King, "there are two girls who sell clotted cream every day in the market-place."

"That is good news," said the Prince. He sent a page to order the seller of cream to bring some up to the palace.

It happened that it was the turn of the Princess to sell the cream that day. When the summons came to go to the palace, she turned very pale, but she could not refuse to go. She hoped that her coarse frock and hood would be a sufficient disguise.

But it happened that when the Princess in her cotton and serge came into the royal presence, the heart of the Prince began to beat very fast. He recognised her as easily as if she had stood before him in her robe of stiff brocade and jewels.

"My Princess!" cried the Prince joyfully.

The Princess dropped the crock of cream she was carrying. The Prince had put his arms about her, and was leading her gently away.

The cream lay spilled amongst the fragments of the crock.

"I don't believe it tastes very good," said a sentry doubtfully, putting a finger into the cream.

But he changed his mind when he had tasted it.



THE name was all right till Freddy went to school. People thought—when they weren't too busy—that her real name was Winifred. Just as they thought Rick's must be Richard. But their school was rather horrid and dreary and noisy, right in the middle of Packington Green, which wasn't green at all, any-where. It was the only kind the overworked mother of Freddy and Rick could afford. She was what other children's parents, rich children, spoke of as: "my little dressmaker; French, you know, and with a beautiful cut. Such a find!"

When you go to school, you have to have your initials on everything. And the others crowd round and ask questions.

"Freddy? Rick? Those aren't your names *reelly*! Freddy's a boy's name! You must mean Dick! Well, you *must* be idiots if you don't know what your names are!"

"We do," said Rick, stubbornly; and then told an Almost-lie, to save his sister from disgrace and tears; "Winifred's her name, and Richard's mine. But they're too long!"

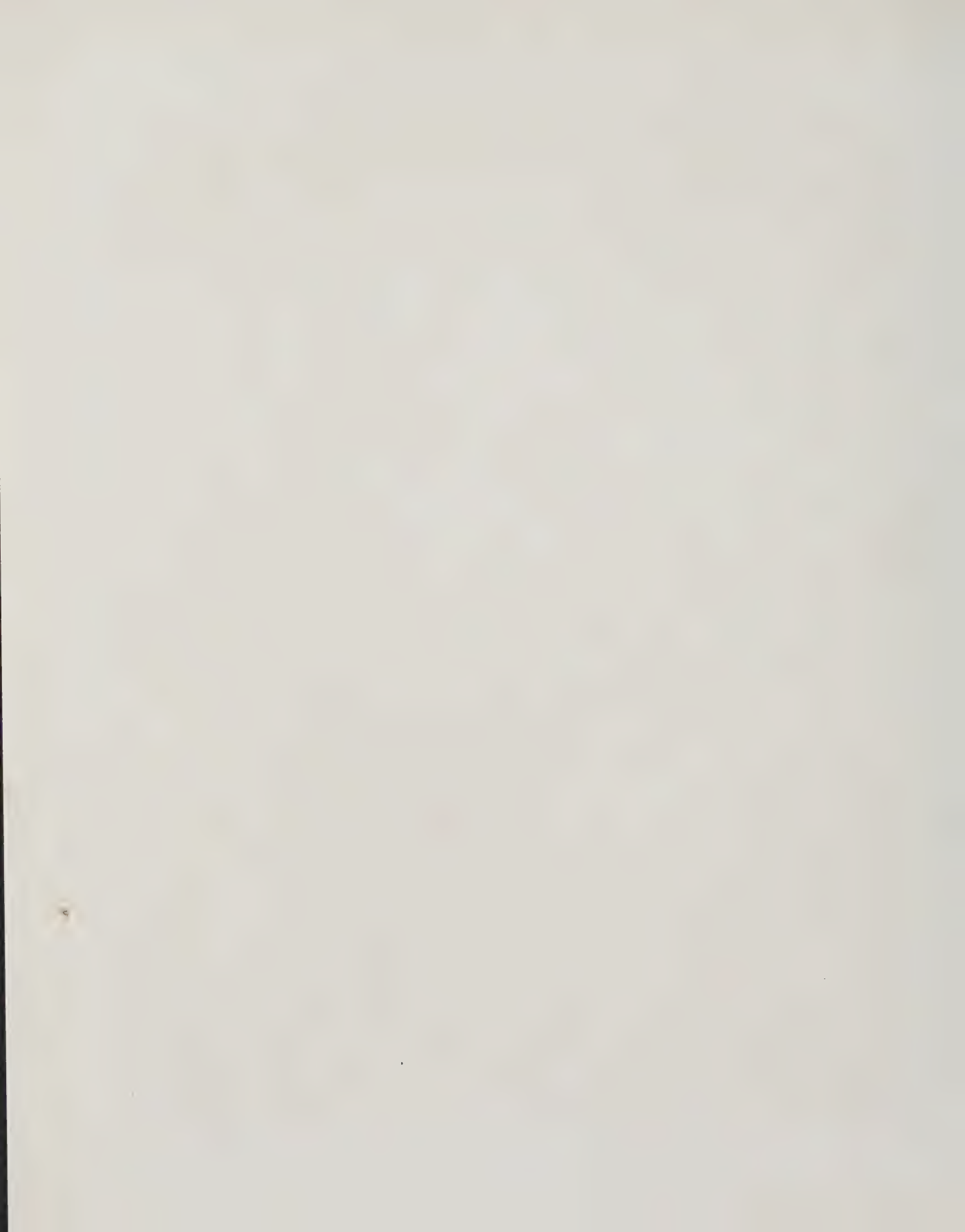
"Go on!" mocked the teasing crowd around them, and pointed to their satchels—"F. Pump" and "C. Pump."



'Well, you *must* be idiots if you don't know
what your names are.'

Three-and-a-half

THE DYS PETO-



THREE-AND-A-GANDER

Pump was bad enough. But, of course, F. and C. gave the show away. F. doesn't stand for Winifred, however badly you spell. Nor C. for Richard.

And suddenly Freddy lost her temper. She had a blazing white temper sometimes, a funny temper which made her quieter instead of noisier, like most tempers. A French temper, with a beautiful cut . . .

"My real name, if you want to know," she said, very distinctly, "is Fredagonda. And my brother's is Chilpéric."

You can imagine the sort of first-day-at-school they had after that! Fredagonda Pump! Chilpéric Pump! Three-and-a-Gander Pump! Oh, I say!! My hat!!! Chilly-Prig and Three-and-a-Gander . . . What swank!!!

"If I was you," said one of their school-mates, the only one with a nice face, who caught them up on their disconsolate way home that evening, "if I was you two, and I'm glad I'm not, I'd drop down to the factory and just change them."

"Our names? Could we? What factory?"

"The Magic Change-Your-Name Factory, of course. I did. I was Douglas Haig Jellicoe, at first. Now I'm Tom."

"But doesn't everyone remember what you were first? and if they do, isn't it just as bad?" asked Rick, his eyes very big.

"No. Part of the magic is that nobody remembers. It works like that. Even Mum thinks I've always been Tom. Cheerio—I must buck up home!"

"How d'you get there?"

"Oh, just go into a public 'phone box, there are some on this Tube Station, and drop in four pennies when they ask for three, and say 'Name Factory' instead of giving a number, just like it tells you to say 'Fire Brigade'. It's the extra penny does it! Then the box moves along double quick, and takes you there."

THREE-AND-A-GANDER.

“ But, Tom, are you *sure*? I’ve never seen anybody——”

“ No, Miss Three-and-a-Gander Pump, because jolly few people know, that’s why. *You* didn’t, till now. Here’s the Tube; suppose you just try.” For Tom was kind-hearted and couldn’t help feeling sorry for them. “ Here! I’ll lend you fourpence! ”



Caught them up . . .



. . . On their disconsolate way home

THREE-AND-A-GANDER

Tom was perfectly right. Freddy and Rick got to the Magic Change-Your-Name Factory quite easily, in the way he said.

It was like an enormous shop, divided into hundreds of tiny compartments, and over each compartment was a name in coloured lights: "John", "Robert", "Antony", "Peter", "Pamela", "Nancy", "Doris"—all the names you can possibly think of. And a network of rails overhead, with brightly-hued little balls that whizzed along them, and dropped into pockets. In every compartment stood a very business-like elf, with bobbed or shingled wings springing from their shoulders, in the usual way.

By great good luck, the "Winifred" and "Richard" compartments happened to be side by side. And the elves were able to attend to the children's wants at once; they were nice about answering questions, too.

"Not very much in fashion just now, these two names," one of them explained in a friendly, gossiping way. "Look at the customers round 'Ann' and 'Joan', 'Jill', and 'Betty', for instance!" And indeed, these counters were being besieged, not only by children; plenty of grown-ups, it seemed, were also longing to change their names. "Quite a rage for the simple kind of name, lately," the Richard-elf went on. "Derek and Michael, Cyril and Christopher, they step round almost before they can say the names their poor mothers gave them, and change 'em to 'Bill'. Just Bill. Boys and men nearly all like Bill. We have ninety-nine attendants at the Bill counter alone. Girls, though, who were named plain and sensible, come running in, when they're about eighteen, with: please can you let me have 'Rosemary' or 'Daphne' or 'Diana'. They don't always stop to get what suits them, and that's a fact!"



GLADYS PETO-

Please can you give me Rosemary

THREE-AND-A-GANDER

Rick pointed to piles of very dusty boxes in a far-off alcove. "What are those?"

"Oh, they're quite out of date," contemptuously. "'Harriet' and 'Amelia', 'Edwin' and 'Joshua' . . . that sort of thing. It's not worth while keeping up compartments for them, so we store them in moth-balls in case there should be a run on them again—as 'Ann' was suddenly wanted. But now—business! Pick out your present names from these, please." The elf handed the children a basket full of the separate letters of the alphabet in glass as sparkling as the names above the compartments.

"What happens, exactly?" Rick wanted to know.

"If yours isn't a name that happens to be in demand—Chilpéric?—No, it's not at all likely anyone will be asking for that; so we just throw it on to the scrap-heap. It gets melted down again. But if it were—well, say, 'George' you were getting rid of, and another boy was just asking for it, I'd pack it up and send it along on the overhead rails to the 'George' compartment. Now, before I throw these away, you're quite sure you want the change?"

Rick nodded; he was quite, quite sure. But Freddy hesitated just a moment. "I wonder," she said, slowly, "*why* Maman called us Fredagonda and Chilpéric?"

The Winifred-elf answered quickly: "Oh, *I* can tell you that, and I'm glad you asked. They're your old family names, you see! No, not your father's. Your father—dead, isn't he? Ah yes, long ago . . . poor Johnny Pump—second mate on the 'Lady Jane' . . . Your mother ran away with him. It upset her family, and they would have nothing more to do with her. She was their only child, too. A very proud old family, with a fine château in Normandy. If you look back



Pick out your present names

THREE - AND - A - GANDER

among the De la Lussac Saint-Tours chronicles, you'll find plenty of Frédégonde and Chilpéric . . . descended from the king of the old legend . . . Good fighters, too . . . There was a story of a knight, Chilpéric, the great friend of Bayard . . . and Frédégonde de la Lussac Saint-Tours died, once, for the sake of the Queen of France——”

“For goodness' sake stop gossiping!” cried the other elf. “These children want to change their names, and be off.”

“No, thank you,” said Fredagonda Pump, looking very tall and proud indeed, “I've changed my mind. That's to say, I don't want to change my name a bit. It wouldn't be fair on—on my family. And I don't mind even if they *do* call me Three-and-a-gander. And Rick doesn't want to change his, either, do you, Rick?” and she gripped his hand firmly.

“Oh, all right,” said Chilpéric Pump, but he couldn't help feeling not quite so noble as his sister. “All right. I'll stick on as I am, if Freddy says I'd better.”

The two elves smiled.

When Rick and Freddy got home that evening, they found their mother, the little dressmaker, French, you know, crying with joy. A letter from her own father and mother had found her at last. They wanted her to return to the beautiful château in Normandy, and live there, always; and, of course, bring her two children, to whom would belong one day the old family home of the De la Lussac Saint-Tours: “And to think, *ma petite*, that we do not even know, yet, the names of our own grandchildren . . .”

“What *luck* that I didn't let you change yours, after all!” breathed Rick, in a fervent aside to Freddy.

Boys *are* like that. . . .



THE King's Herald pranced gaily through the streets on his white horse.

"Prepare to cheer the Princess," he cried. "She's going to drive through the town."

And all the poor people, in fear and trembling, left off their work and stood shivering in the cold streets ready to cry, "Hurrah! Hurrah!" as the Princess passed. But they couldn't smile and wave gaily because they hated the cross, bad-tempered Princess. Yet they knew that if they didn't cheer, she would straightway tell her father, the King, and would have them popped into prison.

But the most miserable little being in the whole of the kingdom was the Princess's little white dog, Jinks, who sat on a rich cushion at his mistress's side, in the gold state carriage.

THE DOG WHO SMILED

The Princess had bought Jinks from an old pedlar because he did such funny tricks and could smile. But, alas, the poor little dog soon forgot how to do these things when he lived in the big palace, for although he had rich food to eat, he missed the old pedlar's soft words and kindness.

That afternoon, as the Princess drove through the market place, she said to Jinks crossly :

“ Smile, you stupid dog, smile ! ”

As she said it, she gave him a dig with her big diamond ring. He could feel it right through his soft coat. Although his little heart was as heavy as lead, he tried hard to do as his mistress wished ; but instead, big, glistening tears welled in his brown eyes and dropped on to the rich cushion.

The Princess saw them and flew into a terrible rage. Ordering the carriage to be stopped, she kicked Jinks with her pointed shoe into the muddy road and left him bruised and bleeding.

“ That'll teach you to disobey me ! ” she cried.

A lovely little shepherdess, called Cherry Blossom, on her way up to the hills to her flock, saw Jinks.

“ You poor little dog,” she murmured, as she picked him up. Jinks whimpered gratefully and gave her a wee smile.

Now the shepherdess was poor, very poor, and had hardly enough to eat. But every tiny morsel that came her way, she shared with her little friend. Still, although food was scarce, he had so many kind words and caresses given him that he became strong and beautiful again.

Soon he began to help Cherry Blossom with her flock, and one cold winter's day when she was ill, Jinks took charge of the sheep and drove them, all by himself, to the meadows.



GLADYS PETO -

Did such funny tricks

THE DOG WHO SMILED

Then when the red sun was setting, he brought them back quite safely.

Cherry Blossom's master, the Duke, was so pleased that he gave them a nice little cottage with a thatched roof to live in.

"Jinks," Cherry Blossom whispered, when they were both tucked up for the night. "Please never run away from me. I love you so."

She put a soft warm arm round his little white neck and he licked it with his rough tongue.

Then, one dreadful day, they met the Princess, looking more bad-tempered than ever for the simple reason that no one would marry her.

Because Jinks was handsome again, and also because she hated anyone who was prettier than herself, she cried:

"Ho, ho! This wretched peasant girl has stolen my dog. Seize her and after you've well beaten her, put her into prison. Meanwhile I will take the dog home."

Some soldiers rushed forward to take Cherry Blossom prisoner. She was so broken-hearted at parting from her little friend that she forgot her own fate and bent down, weeping bitterly, to press a kiss on his wet little nose.

To everybody's astonishment Jinks disappeared. In his place stood a handsome, smiling prince.

"I am Prince Rupert," he said, "and . . ."

"Climb up into my carriage, Prince Rupert, and I will take you to my father's palace," interrupted the Princess, who had at once fallen head over heels in love with the Prince.

"Let me finish first, Madam," said the Prince sternly, "I am heir to this kingdom. Your father had me put under a spell when I was a baby and I was turned into a dog. I was



GLADYS PETO.

All the people stood shivering in the streets ready to
cry "Hurrah! Hurrah!" as the Princess passed.

The Dog who smiled



A nice little cottage with a thatched roof

fated to remain so until someone who really loved me should kiss me on my nose."

"But I loved you," cried the Princess wildly, "I had you in my palace and gave you nice, rich food to eat."

"But no kind words," the Prince reminded her. "You gave me kicks and slaps."

Then he turned to Cherry Blossom who all at once had grown very shy.

"Cherry Blossom has always loved me as much as I love her, and if she still does, she shall be my Princess," he said.

THE DOG WHO SMILED

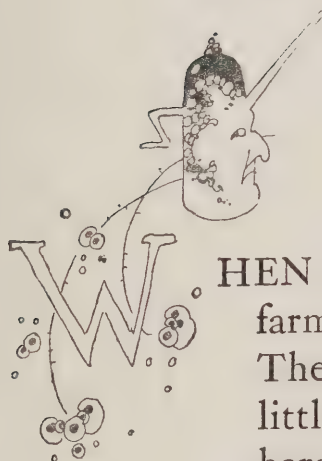
So the ugly Princess and her father had to give up the throne to Cherry Blossom and her Prince. They made a law that anyone who ill-treated a dog would have to go and live with the cross Princess, but she lived alone to the end of her days.



THE WISHING MACHINE

BY

C. LINDSAY EMMERSON



WHEN Toshka was a very little girl, she lived at a farm, and so did both her father and mother. They were very poor indeed and it was a very little farm. When Toshka was born, they could hardly afford to give her a name to herself.

They themselves had a name which was most difficult to pronounce and impossible to spell, so I shall not try to do so, but it sounded like KOOTSIKOFF.

Toshka, who was called after a great mountain which you could see from her home and on which lived bears and many wolves, still lives on the farm with her father and mother, but they are not nearly so poor now, nor Toshka nearly so little. The farm, though, is as small as ever.

At the time I am speaking of, however, not only Toshka's father and mother but everyone in the country were extremely poor. This was partly because the story writers of the country

THE WISHING MACHINE

could only write stories of people who were poor and miserable, and writing stories was one of the principal natural industries. The writers were paid very little and were poorer and more miserable than the people they wrote about, and the more they wrote the poorer they got.

When Toshka was eight years old, a great trouble came to her father and mother and thus to the little farm. Her brother, Georgic, went away to join the army. Georgic did not wish very much to go, but the recruiting sergeant who came to the village to persuade people to be soldiers, tied his wrists so tight with a rope and carried such a large whip, that the young man was at length persuaded, and he went away to



The lambs . . .



. . . Taught to play

THE WISHING MACHINE

volunteer with the rest. He was very miserable, but as he intended to write a story about it all, this was to the good.

After Georgic had gone away, everyone on the farm had to work much harder, and Toshka did not escape her share of the toil. Every morning she was up with the lark, or to speak more correctly with the crow (for larks had been expelled from the country with lilies for idling), and busily occupied with the various tasks which fell to her lot.

The pigs had to be fed, the ducks led to the water, and the lambs taught to play. Then she had to measure the rain that had fallen in the night, and separate the sheep from the goats in the pens where they lived. This was always very difficult because they used to get badly mixed up during the night, and in that country the sheep were so like goats and the goats so much resembled sheep that they could only be distinguished by long practice.

After she had done all this Toshka had to give the dog his barking lesson and place fresh cheese in all the mouse traps, call the cows home and put pieces of lettuce outside all the rabbit holes in the farm warren. She had to feed the bees and drive the stray bears out of the orchard, and collect the pigeons' eggs for market.

It was very hard work for a small child.

In the winter when the ground lay deep in snow, Toshka had to assist in the task of clearing the latter and emptying it into the deep pits kept for the purpose. Later on when Spring came and the snow melted, the river used to overflow its banks and flood the farm. The water had, of course, to be carried away in buckets and put back into the river. There is always something to do in a farm and Toshka did a great deal of it.

It was early in the summer after the floods had subsided,



'She oiled it, and cleaned it, and wished
for an ivory rolling pin.'

The Wishing Machine

THE WISHING MACHINE

when Georgic went away to join the army. He and many other young men from the villages near travelled together to the capital of the country which was named Solomanstadt, after a great reformer of that name, but known to most people as Hurroosh, which in Toshka's language means "The City of much joy, many festivities and a great deal to eat." As, however, all these things had been reformed away by Soloman, following the death of King Tom the Third, and there was now practically no joy and precious little to eat at Hurroosh, we will call it by its new name.

On arrival at the capital, Georgic, who was a tall handsome youth, joined the Chocolate Guards who were stationed in the city and were employed to guard the public buildings and the palace.

They were called the Chocolate Guards partly because their uniform was that colour and partly because they used to be given presents of chocolate on King Tom's birthdays. Now, however, the presents of chocolate had ceased altogether and the chocolate uniform had done likewise in a great many places. Georgic's tunic had ceased under his arms and his trousers both at the knees and where he sat down. It was a much used uniform, but the country was too poor to buy a new one for him. Georgic found life as a soldier just as tiring as it had been on a farm. He was always being sent for to stamp his feet on the barrack square and perform exercises with his imitation wooden gun (the money to buy real rifles had been reformed away by a friend of Soloman's who was Minister of War) and the soldiers were taken for dreadfully long walks. Every fourth day Georgic used to be one of those who went to guard King Tom's palace where Soloman now lived. And on those days, Georgic found, people used to worry about his clothes in a most extraordinary way. First a corporal would

THE WISHING MACHINE

look at him all over while he stood perfectly still with the others. Then a sergeant would do the same to both him and the corporal. Then a sergeant-major who was the most important person in the Chocolate Guards would come and look at everyone, including the sergeant and the corporal, and finally an officer would come and have a look and march them all off to the palace.

Before this was done, however, those with the shabbiest uniforms were always arranged to be on the inside, where they would show least. They were very particular about appearance in the Chocolate Guards.

Georgic at first was one of those who used to march in front for the holes in his coat only showed from behind. Later on, however, when his boots wore out, he was given a place in the



The soldiers were taken for dreadfully long walks

THE WISHING MACHINE

middle; which he liked much better for he could eat sweets and talk to the other men without being noticed. This one did not dare to do if one of the sergeants was looking, for discipline was so strict in the Guards that men who as much as smoked cigarettes when on sentry-go were certain to be rudely spoken to and perhaps even severely reprimanded by the regimental lance corporal.

One day, however, Georgic got into very serious trouble. It was not for talking or eating in the ranks, but for something that was not his fault in the least. It was the occasion of the Review of the troops in honour of something or other that Soloman had done, and the latter himself was to be present and receive a salute of cannons to which he had decided he was entitled on all public occasions.

As, unfortunately, after the last revolution nearly all the cannons belonging to the army had been turned into ploughs (and very bad ones they made), they had to use imitation guns made for the occasion, and let off crackers behind them, but as time went on and the country got poorer and poorer, they could not afford even crackers. So it was the custom of twenty-one soldiers to say bang very loudly one after another when a salute was required. Georgic, who had in addition to other fine qualities a very loud voice, was selected for this duty.

It happened to be very severe weather about this time and he had caught a very bad cold in the head owing to the draughts which whistled constantly through his uniform.

He sneezed every few minutes as they marched to the palace and the guard had to be halted several times while he blew his nose. It was a very cold day but the sun was shining and the palace square, as it said in the paper afterwards, pre-



sented a gay and animated appearance. In front of the palace the guns to be used in the salute (they were made of cardboard and mounted on perambulator wheels) were arranged in a row, and the band played the gayest tunes that they knew. The band instru-

GLADYS PETO.

THE WISHING MACHINE

ments were only made of paper for real trumpets were too expensive, but the bandsmen hummed the tunes through them as hard as they could and made a deal of noise.

When the time came for the salute to be fired, Georgic was standing before the third gun from the end of the row. That is to say he was the third to say bang.

The clock on the tower of the palace struck eleven, and the great Mr. Soloman himself appeared on the marble steps of the palace. He was dressed very sumptuously and he bowed and smiled towards the crowds, the band, and the artillery.

“Bang” went the first gun in a deep bass voice.

“Bang” said the second in a high falsetto. The five seconds went by and it was Georgic’s turn. But alas, he sneezed instead, and that not once but several times.

He was hurried away to the Guard-room sneezing, to the consternation of the crowd, and anger of Soloman, whose birthday treat had been spoilt. It was a grave offence to sneeze on parade, and Georgic was locked into a cell to wait while they decided what to do with him. It was not dark in the cell and it was a pretty big one—so large in fact, that it had been used to store a lot of old lumber of various kinds, some old cannons, and several lots of machinery, which the engineers had taken to pieces and had not had time to put together again.

Georgic, who had for a time amused himself by writing his name and the date on the wall, began to poke about amongst the odds and ends of the things mentioned. Half buried amongst a pile of disused regimental records, he suddenly discovered a very old wishing machine.

It was a very ordinary wishing machine, with a spout at one end and a handle at the side, just like any other wishing machine.

THE WISHING MACHINE

Georgic picked it up and tried the handle. It was very stiff, but it would turn. It occurred to him that if he had a key he could let himself out of the cell and run away. He turned the handle again and wished, and an old rusty key clattered out of the spout on to the floor. With a shout of joy he rushed to the door and tried the key in the lock. It did not fit.

"How stupid of me," he thought. He hastily turned the handle again and wished for one that *would* fit. This time he was more successful, the key turned the lock quite easily. He pulled the door, but it would not move, because it was bolted on the outside. Georgic sat down on an old drum and tried to think.

"A nice kettle of fish," he said. He was, of course, merely using an expression which people say when they are in a great difficulty, but as he happened to be turning the handle of the wishing machine while he spoke, a nice kettle of fish immediately appeared. It was a very nice kettle of fish, and the fish looked very pretty swimming about inside, but were of no use in escaping from prison.

Indeed, he might have been there still, if it had not been for Toshka, who was doing a little wishing on her own account, far away on the little farm which was Georgic's home.

It happened that on this same day while Georgic had been falling into disgrace in Solomanstadt, there had been trouble on the farm also.

To begin with, a large wolf had got into the garden, and not only eaten the dog's dinner, but refused to get out of his kennel. Secondly, some old witch who owed a grudge against Toshka's father, had chosen to put a spell on the kitchen chimney, so that the smoke came down it instead of going up. (A spell very commonly used for chimneys).

Thirdly, Toshka was trying to make pastry, and this was



GLADYS, PETO-

A large wolf . . . had eaten the dog's dinner

THE WISHING MACHINE

always troublesome, for some time before her father had been obliged, owing to increasing poverty, to sell the rolling pin in order to buy flour. Toshka wished to use the cat, which was long and thin, as a rolling pin, but the arrangement was not satisfactory. A lot of flour got stuck to the cat's fur, and the cat did not like it.

Toshka had gathered some eikons from the great samovar tree in the orchard and was trying to make a pie. But it was useless, the room was full of reeking smoke and her hands were badly scratched by the rolling pin. She at length stopped and sat down to think just as Georgic was doing at that precise moment, but as it turned out with more result.

For she remembered that she had an unused wish that her fairy godmother had given her amongst others on her last birthday. It was the last one in the box, and she had saved it up in case she wanted it. She fetched it from her room and holding it in her right hand and looking up at the ceiling in accordance with the instructions on the lid of the box, said, "I wish that Georgic would come back. Quickly!"

It was a good wish, one of the best (that is why she had saved it up) and very soon afterwards, there was a loud bump on the doorstep and Georgic, with the wishing machine still under his arm, staggered in, very breathless and cold from rushing through the air so fast.

"Well," he said, "I never expected to be back so soon again."

"But I wished you back," said Toshka, "I knew you would come."

"Oh," said Georgic, "you did, did you? Well, next time you do it, don't do it so suddenly. You've no idea how I bumped my head going through the ceiling of the room I came from" (he did not mention what room it was) "but it *is* nice to be back."



Toshka wished to use the cat

THE WISHING MACHINE

“What is that under your arm?” asked Toshka, “is it a present for me?”

Georgic had forgotten that he was still holding the wishing machine.


“Yes,” he replied, “it is a wishing machine. I bought it for you in Solomanstadt” (he was sometimes a little inaccurate), “but I am not sure that it works very well.”

I need not tell you how delighted Toshka was with the wishing machine. How she oiled it and cleaned it and wished for an ivory rolling pin, and wished the wolf out of the dog kennel.

You can imagine how many things they wished for, for the farm, and how happy and prosperous they were ever after. The farm, though, is as little as it ever was, they prefer it so.



The band instruments were only made of paper




KING GREENMUCH'S PALACE

BY

V CALEXANDER



NCE upon a time
there lived a king
at the bottom of

the sea. He was rather a grumpy old king, and suggested that the fairies did not pay him enough attention. He wanted to be the greatest king in the world, and asked the queen to give him some of her fairies so that they could look after him. These he called mermaids, and they have survived until this day.

But although he was surrounded with beautiful mermaids, he was still not happy. Queen Mab had told him over the telephone all about the new sitting-room she was building.

"Gold and blue and silver, and beautiful chairs of gold inlaid with jewels," she said. "I shall always have bowls of roses on my tables winter and summer, and my pictures shall be the most beautiful I can get."

"I shall have a new sitting-room built too," cried the King. I haven't told you his name, have I? It is Greenmuch. A

KING GREENMUCH'S PALACE



The fairy monitor for the week peeps in the book

funny name you'll admit for a king! "Come and see me in six months' time and I'll show you a wonderful sight."

The Queen entered in her diary the date, and then forgot all about it. All queens keep diaries, else how are they to remember things? Once a week, on Monday, the fairy monitor for the week peeps in the book, and makes a note of where the queen is to go that week. Sometimes a fairy forgets, and then Queen Mab *is* angry.

But this is not telling the story of King Greenmuch's sitting-room.

First of all he had windows built on every side of the room. Yes, it can be done, if you only think a moment. He had a bay window, a round window, a straight window, and a tall lattice window made in the four walls. It made it look very odd, but King Greenmuch said to himself that it was quite different from Queen Mab's. It was indeed!

Then he had the ceiling painted blue to look like the sky, but the sky was always changing, so every day he had the paint of the day before covered over. The fairy workmen went on strike over this, so he decided he would paint it himself.

"Stuff and nonsense their saying it can't be done. Of



And then Queen Mab is angry

KING GREENMUCH'S PALACE

course it can!" There was a bad thunderstorm that day, so the sky was pitch black and the ceiling also. It was very hard work, and the King decided that he would never, never have it changed. On his writing an agreement to this effect, the workmen came back.

The walls he decided should be yellow, blue, red and orange.

"But, your Majesty," said the foreman of the fairies, "I don't think it will look a bit nice, and you will only be sorry for it afterwards. Suppose we make them a uniform grey, and you can have bright coloured curtains."

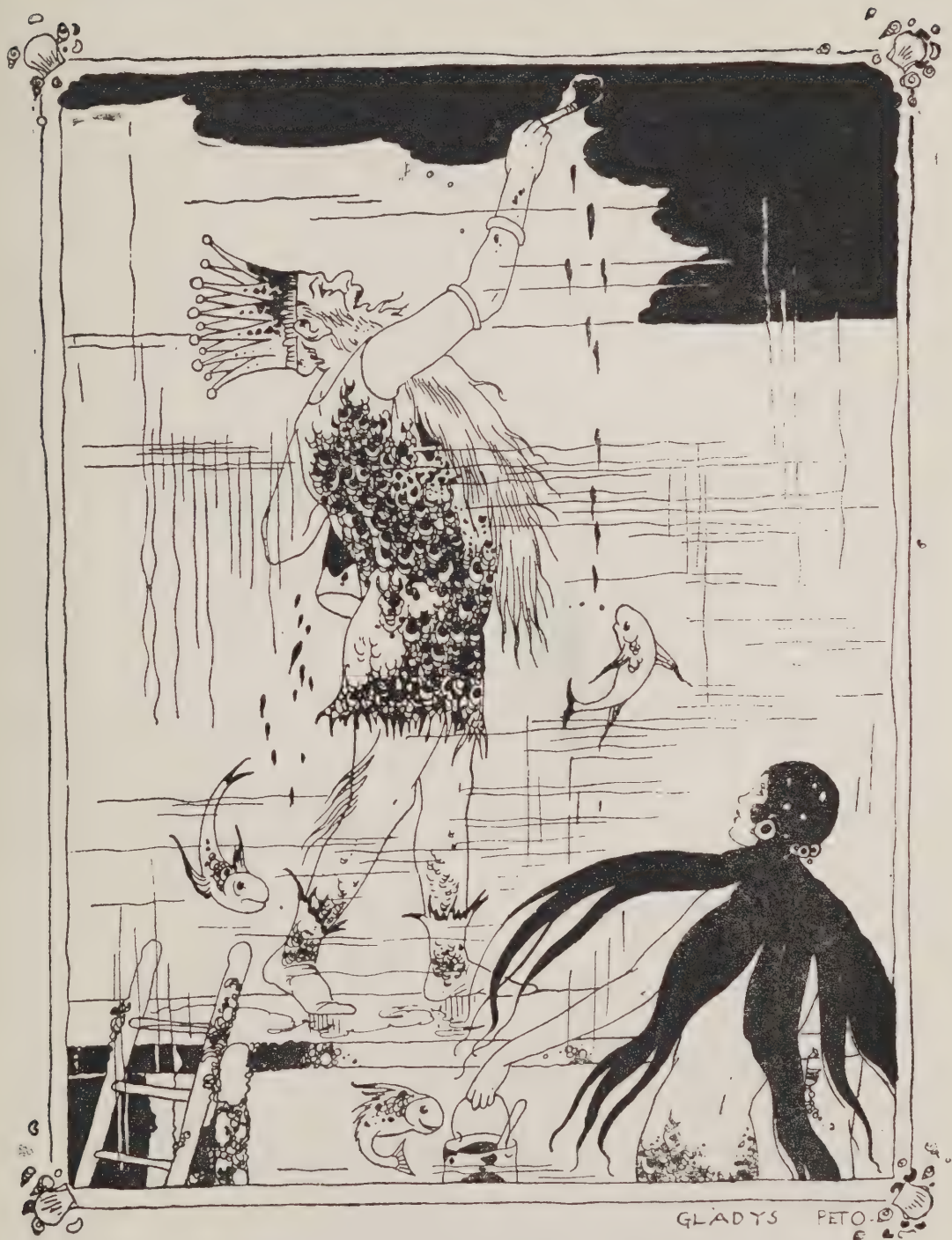
"They are going to be four colours," said the King obstinately, "and I'm going to have bright coloured curtains as well."

The workman shrugged his shoulders. It was no good arguing with the King.

So the walls were painted, and looked *dreadful*. They were made worse by the many coloured curtains he had hung, for he could not make up his mind to the choice, and decided that he must have *every* colour.

He had a fireplace put at one end, but he wouldn't have a fire in it, in case it should get dirty. He had an oval looking-glass put over it, but he had it covered with a bandana handkerchief in case a mermaid should look in the glass, instead of doing her dusting of a morning. He had low bookcases all around the room, but the binding of the books was turned to the wall, for the same reason as he had covered up the looking-glass, in case the mermaids looked at them when they ought to have been working.

He collected shells, seaweed, sea-horses, anemones, rocks, and pebbles, which he had in glass cases suspended from the ceiling.



GLADYS PETO.

He decided he would paint it himself

KING GREENMUCH'S PALACE

And when he had all these things fixed, he surveyed the room carefully.

"I guess Queen Mab hasn't a room in her palace like this," he said. "Now for some furniture."

He made a table out of four packing cases, the insides of which he turned into a larder. For chairs he brought boulders from the bottom of the sea. Pictures on the walls he had none. Indeed, there wasn't much room for them, and for a carpet he had sand taken from a cave.

"I think it is a wonderful room," he said, as the workmen departed. "To-morrow, Queen Mab comes to take tea with me."

He never slept a wink all night for thinking of his wonderful sitting-room, and sat at the lattice window the whole afternoon, watching for Queen Mab.

He saw her coming at last, and rang the bell on the packing cases for tea.

"Welcome, your Majesty," he said, as he helped her from the shell carriage she was using. "You will be surprised at my room."

"I wonder!" was all Queen Mab said.

But King Greenmuch was right. She *was* surprised, and after one brief look ran back to her carriage.

"What a terrible place," she said. "It is all colours—no relief, it would give me terrible dreams to stay there."

"You haven't anything like it," said King Greenmuch triumphantly.

"No, and I'm not going to let anyone else have a place like it. I'm going to bewitch it so that it will never be seen again."



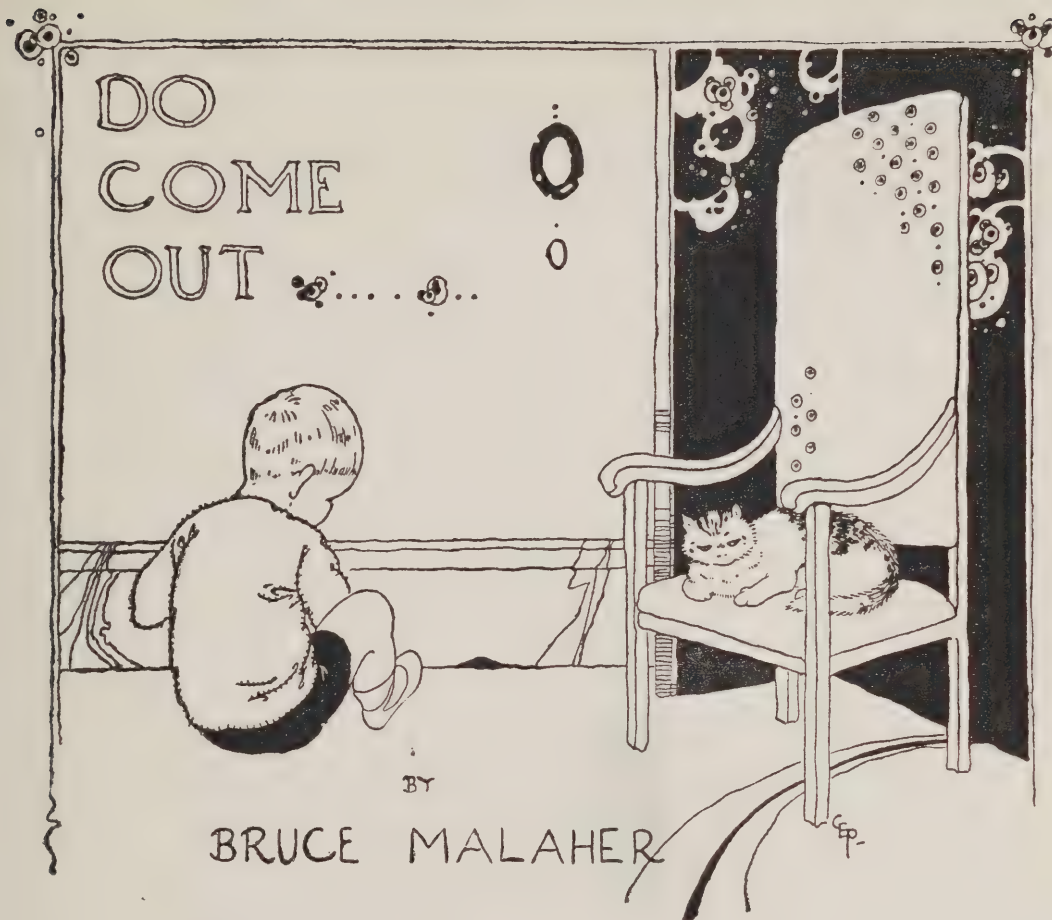
He had it covered with a bandana handkerchief

KING GREENMUCH'S PALACE

The Queen uttered a spell, and it all came to pass as she said it should.

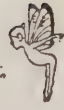
Now I want to tell you a secret. Before the King Greenmuch built this room, the sea was as clear as crystal, and one could see the bottom, but Queen Mab bewitched it to be green and dark. She was so afraid that someone would see the sitting-room of King Greenmuch. And that is why some parts of the sea are unexplored. Queen Mab had to bewitch those parts, for it is there that King Greenmuch and his mermaids and his palace are to be found.





“COME little Mouse, I hear you stirring
 By the curtain there,
 Are you afraid of Pussy purring
 In Grandfather's chair?
 She would not dare to touch a whisker
 Whilst I'm sitting here,
 So come along now
 With a scrape and bow,
 Come along Mousie dear.”

“No, little Master, it is daring
 To do more than squeak,
 See the coat that Pussy is wearing
 Velvety and sleek;
 It is made of mice and dickie-birds
 Which she eats for tea,
 It would be risky
 To be so frisky
 When Puss is there to see.”



SHADOWLAND:

BY

BRUCE MALAHER

MYSTERIOUS shadows in the gloom of trees
Are filled with Fairy Folk who love to play
And fly upon the pinions of the breeze
That hastens shoreward at the end of day;
For every tree-trunk is a Fairy's home,
—Though Mortal eyes can see no entrance there—
But in the evening when I take a roam
I catch the music of a little air,
And with my ear pressed up against each tree
Can hear a voice within sing merrily.

There are a myriad eyes that watch unseen
The curious doings of the Mortal world;
A myriad tongues discuss us too, I ween,
In birds' nests in the trees—where there lie curled
Little green Fairies tired of their play
Of stealing honey and of painting flowers:
All these discuss the doings of the day
In nests, in tree-trunks, and in secret bowers;
Until the twilight, when they leave these places
And ride on bats and owls in merry races.



GLADYS PETO.

‘And with my ear pressed up against each tree,
Can hear a voice within sing merrily.’

Shadowland



CHRISTINE JOPE-SLADE

BOMBOM was the poorest man in the world. He owned only two things. They were a waltzing mouse and a handful of peacocks' feathers. He said, "If ever I am to eat again, or sleep under a roof, or wear shoes on my feet I must sell these things for far, far more than they are worth." All round him in his own home town he saw people selling things for far more than they were worth, and being called "merchant princes" for it; Alas! the things they sold were neither peacocks' feathers nor waltzing mice!

Bombom was clever. His brains used to wriggle so violently under his scalp that they fretted all the hair off, making him look an old man. He said:

"Here in my land they know all about waltzing mice and peacocks' feathers. I must go to a place where they are

THE WALTZING MOUSE

novelties. People only want to own something no one else has got, or something everyone has to have."

He put the peacocks' feathers in his belt, and the waltzing mouse in a box and strode off across the desert towards the setting sun.

"I wish I could have put you up a few sandwiches, Bombom," his mother called after him. "But I have nothing to put between them, and nothing to put round what might have been between."

"If words had cost anything she'd have said, 'No food, Bombom,'" thought Bombom, and he thought so hard his last hair dropped off like a lizard's tail and lay glistening on the desert.

Three days later he and his white mouse and peacocks' feathers arrived outside the walls of a strange remote city.

"Surely, surely the inhabitants of this lonely spot have seen neither waltzing mice nor peacocks' feathers," thought Bombom; and he sat on the peacocks' feathers to hide them and hid the box with the waltzing mouse inside his robe and went fast asleep.

He woke when it was twilight and heard a great noise within the city walls; banging, clanging, groaning, shrieking, pounding and the frantic barking of dogs and cries of children.

The doors of the city were thrown open and there flowed over the desert a cascade of scurrying, squeaking, jumping, wriggling, twirling, white, waltzing mice.

Bombom's mouse inside her box nearly went mad with excitement. She kept squeaking, "Oh, I hear Cousin Matilda's voice. I must ask her if her paw ever got better. Oh, I hear Nephew Ralph, I must ask him if he won the great dustbin raffle last year."



"There, I'm glad I've thrown the dusty things away"

THE WALTZING MOUSE

And as the white mice melted into the distance like snow he heard the townspeople cry:

"The plague is over. The last waltzing mouse is banished. Safety to our cheeses, peace be upon our crumbs."

And they pasted up a huge notice on the city gates; it said:

"Whoever enters this city accompanied by a white waltzing mouse will not leave it again accompanied by his head."

Bombom opened the box and picked the white waltzing mouse up by her tail.

"Whatever you are," he said, "you are no novelty and neither is my head; but I intend to keep it on."

And he went to sleep again.

It was dark and he was awakened by a soft and silken tickling on his face.

He put his hand up and found himself covered with peacocks' feathers, and as he removed them he heard two women leaning over the wall and chatting.

"There! I'm glad I've thrown the dusty things away," one said. "Really; since they've got those last hundred peacocks in the royal gardens you see the feathers in every cottage."

"Nasty common things," agreed her companion.

Bombom added the discarded feathers to his own collection. Then he took out the white waltzing mouse, flung away the box, hid the mouse in his hand, picked up his feathers and knocked on the door in the great wall.

It opened and he went through.

He found his way to the Lord Chamberlain's apartments.

"I must see the King," he said.

"Why?"

"I have something that would interest him."

"And what is that?"

THE WALTZING MOUSE

“ A white waltzing mouse and a handful of feathers.”

“ It is true you have an odd head,” said the Lord Chamberlain, snorting with rage, “ but you would look odder without it.”

“ There is no such word as ‘ odder ’,” said Bombom, who had done very well at the village school. “ The King’s Court is the smartest in the world.”

“ It is,” said the Lord Chamberlain.

“ Well, it ISN’T,” said Bombom.

He lighted one of the peacock’s feathers and held it negligently under the fainting Chamberlain’s nose.

“ Now this is one of the very best I’ve got in stock,” he said to that unconscious gentleman. “ I’m afraid we’ll have to charge accordingly presently.”

“ Before we have you executed we’ll find out what you mean,” said the Lord Chamberlain, coming to suddenly.

“ I mean the ladies of your Court can’t waltz for little apples and everyone knows it. You’re the laughing stock of the whole world. Out in the great wide world, when a man’s so old and crooked up with rheumatism he can’t walk they say, ‘ Ah! Now you waltz like the ladies at the King’s Court.’ ”

“ If this is true we beg you, we implore you, we will pay you anything to put it right,” sobbed the Chamberlain; and still sobbing he led him to the King.

The King was fearfully upset.

“ I have always stood so well with the whole world,” he moaned.

“ Ah! STOOD, Sire,” said Bombom, who had pretty manners, “ but never waltzed. You had a million teachers—and last night you turned them into the desert. I saw them run away. What will the great world say? It will laugh and say,



Her-Serene-Highness Royal-Stocking-mender

THE WALTZING MOUSE

‘The mice could waltz and his ladies couldn’t; so the King was jealous and sent them away.’ ”

“To-day there is not one waltzing mouse in all the city,” cried the King pitifully. “Oh! what disgrace has come upon me and my Court. We thought ourselves so smart and clever and marvellous.”

Gently Bombom opened his hand and showed his waltzing mouse.

“I saw your Majesty’s need,” he said. “I saved your Majesty. I chased this mouse across the desert. I fell in ravines and rivers . . . I . . .”

“What would you like?” implored the King with tears of gratitude. “What would you like?”

“A plate of sandwiches to start with,” said Bombom, “and after that a castle for me and another for my mother, and a horse, and a few things like that.”

“Everything you wish,” said the King, “if you will put this little matter of the waltzing right for us,” and he put a furious foot on the bell push and rang till every lady of the Court stood fluttering and panting in the room; and when they saw the waltzing mouse they pointed to Bombom and said:

“He is still wearing his head, Sire. Would it not be better to have it off?”

This rather annoyed Bombom and he stood up and made a cutting little speech and said they waltzed like frozen cabbage stumps and drowned angle-worms.

“And are *you* here to teach us?” said her-Serene-Highness Royal-Stocking-mender-in-particular-to-the-King. She was a high-coloured lady with a wild, wild temper.

“It’s my day out,” said Bombom disdainfully. “But my mouse will teach you.”



GLADYS PETO.

Bombom took a peacock's feather . . .

THE WALTZING MOUSE

Oh! She was cross! She wanted to put Bombom across her broad knee and smack him with her broad hand; and Bombom knew this and his eyes laughed and laughed at her.

They put the mouse on the table and the King made the ladies twirl and twirl till the whole room seemed to go round and there was such a dust it was like spring cleaning without tea-leaves; and the ladies turned pink and salmon and mauvey; and the Royal-Stocking-mender-in-particular-to-the-King was quite heliotrope.

The King would have no mercy. He didn't like to think the world was laughing at his Court. He was very vain.

At last the Royal-Stocking-mender-in-chief-to-the-King called out:

"Your Majesty, that mouse waltzes so beautifully because she follows her tail, chases it like a kitten. WE can't do that."

"Of course not!" said the King. "I'm afraid we shall have to ask you for your head after all," he said to Bombom.

"But I have tails to sell," said Bombom. "A tail for every lady in the Court."

"Ask what you will for them and it shall be yours," said the King. "You've had a sandwich and a couple of castles. What would you like now?"

"A safety-pin from every lady of the Court," said Bombom, producing his peacocks' feathers. "Permission to live here happily and peacefully in my castle with enough to eat and enough to spend all my life; and I'd like it in writing."

"Granted," said the King.

Bombom took a peacock's feather and pinned one on the back of every lady's frock.

"Follow that when you turn round like the mouse does her tail," he said, "and I think the Lord Chamberlain should learn

THE WALTZING MOUSE

too," he added, " but I have only a burnt feather, and I don't care to part with that."

" Of course he must learn," said the King. " What do you want for the feather? "

" A coach and horses to fetch my mother and the Chamberlain to take her a plate of sandwiches."

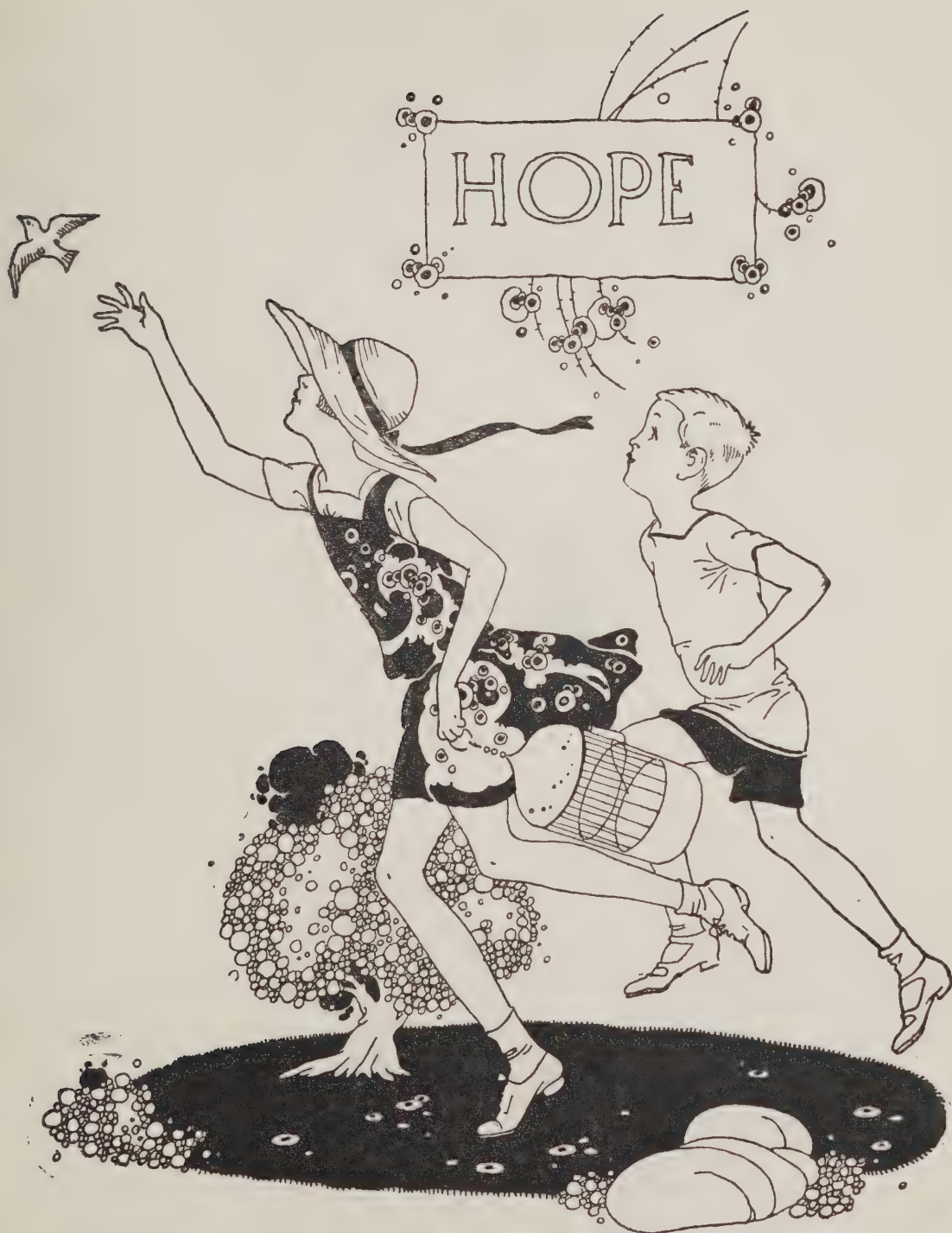
" Right! " said the King.

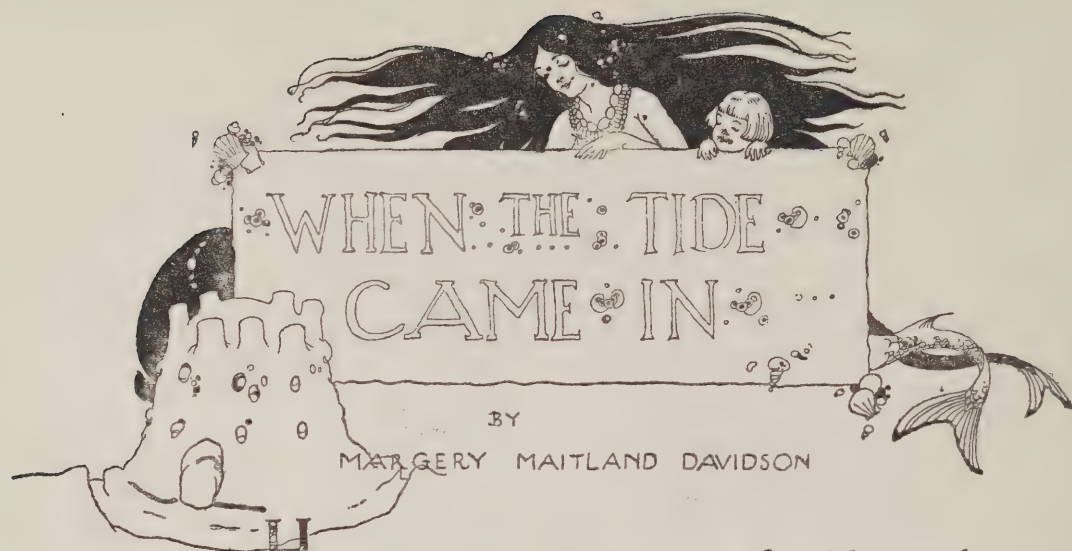
" And her-Serene-Highness Royal-Stocking-mender-in-particular-to-the-King, to mend my stockings," said Bombom slowly. " I am VERY hard on them and I wear bedsocks too and rub the heels out on the sheets."

" Of course! " said the King.

" At your service, milord," said her-Serene-Highness Royal-Stocking-mender-in-particular-to-the-King; but I STILL think it WAS NOT pretty of Bombom.







HUGH gave a last pat of pride to the sand castle. It stood, proud and majestic, guarding the entrance of a little cave where he and Betty undressed when they bathed.

“Phew,” said Betty, flinging off her straw hat, “I’m awfully hot and tired, aren’t you, Hugh? But it is worth it, isn’t it?” she went on, as she sat down on the warm brown sand and tucked up her fat knees to her chin. “It’s like a fairy castle with those turrets and little moat.”

“It’s not bad,” said Hugh grudgingly. Girls always went off the deep end about things in such a silly way and talked about fairies and things.

“I wonder,” Betty said dreamily later on as she and Hugh lay full length, with their arms folded under their heads, “I wonder what’ll happen to our castle in the night.”

Hugh grunted. The sun was setting far away behind the sea and making a golden staircase on the waves. He blinked and felt so very sleepy. He wished Betty wouldn’t talk. But then women were always such chatterboxes.

“Silly kid,” he said, “nothing special will happen. The sand will get wetter and wetter as the sea gets nearer and

WHEN THE TIDE CAME IN

nearer and it'll just melt the castle away. But I've taken a snapshot of it so I don't care."

"Oh, don't you?" whispered a soft voice. At least Hugh thought it was a voice, but he couldn't make quite sure. The sea was lapping lazily against the pebbles, making a noise like lots of silk dresses, like Mummy wore, all rustling together.

"What about us?" asked another voice.

Then he could hardly believe his eyes when he saw, tripping down the golden staircase on the sea, a medley of people he had never seen before, moving in a most peculiar manner. They did it in just the sort of way he himself went down the stairs in dreams, half walking, half flying, and going frightfully quickly, like Daddy when he was in a hurry to catch a train.

Still it was no wonder they couldn't walk quite properly, because they had tails instead of feet; most of them at any rate.

"Mermaids!" gasped Hugh, and reached out to take Betty's hand. He was terribly glad to find it quite near him.

The mermaids were quite near now. One of them with long fair hair, like a princess in a fairy story, came near to him.

She looked so soft and sweet that he started when she bawled out to him in a strong American accent, at the top of her voice: "Are you the guy who created that cute little castle right there?"

"He's King of the Castle," answered Betty proudly, "and I'm Queen."

"You don't say!" and the mermaid laughed queerly, "I never should have guessed it."

"Excuse me!" And another dainty little mermaid stepped

WHEN THE TIDE CAME IN

forward and spoke nice pleasant English. "This merlady doesn't quite understand. She has come over from the American sea for a holiday. She's had a frightfully busy time this summer stealing castles, and spades and pails, as well as stray clothes left about by careless children on the sands. And she's helped heaps of boys and girls to get back to the beach when they have been out of their depth, beside making sponges."

"I see," said Hugh thoughtfully. He was wondering if they were going to steal *his* castle.

"Don't be frightened," smiled the little mermaid, as if she guessed his thoughts, "we only want you to lend us your castle to give a dance in to-night. We've got a night off too, and I do so want to wear my new silk seaweed dress."

"Old Neppy has given us permission," shouted the American lady.

"Who's Neppy?" inquired Hugh politely.

"Why, old Neptune, of course," explained the dainty one. "He's King of the sea you know. He keeps us awfully busy collecting and guarding his treasures and odds and ends. Things like pearls and wrecks. He hates it when men try to take away his possessions from him, and kicks up awful storms sometimes. He's got a very bad temper."

"Will he come to the dance?" asked Betty, rather frightened.

"Yes, he's very pleased to-day, as you can see by the calmness of the sea. He's even had his tail trimmed for the occasion."

"Can we come to the ball?" said Hugh shyly.

"Why, of course you can. As you are King of the Castle you will have to entertain King Neptune. You'll be careful,

WHEN THE TIDE CAME IN

though, not to tread on his beard, won't you?" she added anxiously. "He's very liable to trip over it himself."

She disappeared, but soon came back with two lovely crowns made of shells and star fish, one for each of them. They felt very proud when they put them on.

After that no one seemed to take much notice of Hugh and Betty. There was a tremendous hustle going on. The sand castle they had taken all day to build suddenly became enormous, which was fortunate considering the amount of people coming to the ball.

There were mermen and mermaids on prancing sea-horses, others riding on crabs and shrimps, all looking very happy.

"It must be very difficult to stick on," whispered Betty. "Almost as hard as some of the things at Wembley."

Fat white gulls cried and made music, while they beat time with their wings.

"Who's this?" demanded a voice. Hugh felt a prod in the middle of the back. Turning round quickly he saw a large red-cheeked old man with a long, long beard. It was King Neptune, and he had poked Hugh with his trident. Hugh felt very cross. After all it was his castle. But before he had a chance to speak Neptune cried:

"Come here, thingummy-tight, what's-his-name, what-you-may-call-t, thing-a-my-bob . . . Make me some toast." And he handed Hugh his trident to use as his toasting fork.

"Well I never," cried Hugh indignantly, "I've read that King Neptune uses his trident to rule the waves with, so I *won't* use it to make toast with. It's not the right thing to do."

"He rebels, he disobeys me," cried Neptune, and burst into

WHEN THE TIDE CAME IN

tears. All the guests started to weep too—out of politeness, Hugh supposed.

“Do comfort him, Hugh,” Betty whispered. “Everything is getting so horribly wet. Neptune’s beard is soaked. The castle will be flooded if he goes on much longer.”

“All right,” grumbled Hugh. “I’ll make his toast for him.”

At that, Neptune, instead of getting quieter, suddenly stamped his feet with rage.

“Dear, oh dear,” sighed the pretty little mermaid. “He is in one of his nasty tempers now, and there’ll be an awful storm. I shan’t be able to have my night off after all. There’ll be so many fishermen to save.”



WHEN THE TIDE CAME IN

“Bring my sword-fish!” yelled Neptune.

Hugh began to feel rather nervous, and to wish he had been more careful. He didn’t feel any better either when a cold wriggly fish with a long spike coming out of his head was pushed into his hand. He saw that Neptune had the same.

“You’ll have to fight,” said Betty, “there’s nowhere to run away to.”

“I don’t care,” cried Hugh, all of a sudden feeling very brave. “I’ll beat him, you see if I don’t.”

Neptune raised his fish and prodded Hugh, this time in the tummy. Hugh struck back with all his might. As his sword fish was so slippery, it fell out of his hand.

“Now for it,” he muttered, and gritted his teeth. In a flash he had old Neptune by the beard. He tugged and tugged.

“Don’t do that!” cried the old man. “Please don’t do that. I’ll give you back your spade and pail I stole last year, if only you’ll let go.”

Tears were streaming down his cheeks again, and although Hugh felt his clothes were simply sopping, he still clung on.

“Hold on to me, Betty,” he cried, “I’ll take care of you. Old Neppy can do his worst now. I’ll never lend him my castle again.”

There was a roar from all the merladies and gentlemen-in-waiting.

“Good gracious!” said a voice. “There they are, both of them! Wake up, Hugh and Betty, it’s getting dark. The sea is so near it has soaked your clothes!”

The first thing Hugh did was to look for his castle. But it had disappeared.

WHEN THE TIDE CAME IN

“What a beautiful evening it is,” Aunt Polly’s voice went on, “and the sea is so calm.”

“Oh, *is* it,” thought Hugh. He didn’t say anything. After all grown-ups were sometimes very dense. But he knew what extraordinary doings were going on under the waves, in spite of the peace on the top. Betty was not far wrong after all, when she talked about fairies. Perhaps she would treat him with more respect now that she had seen him have a real fight with Old King Neppy. After all it had been fun . . . But on the whole, he felt he would rather be on land.



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